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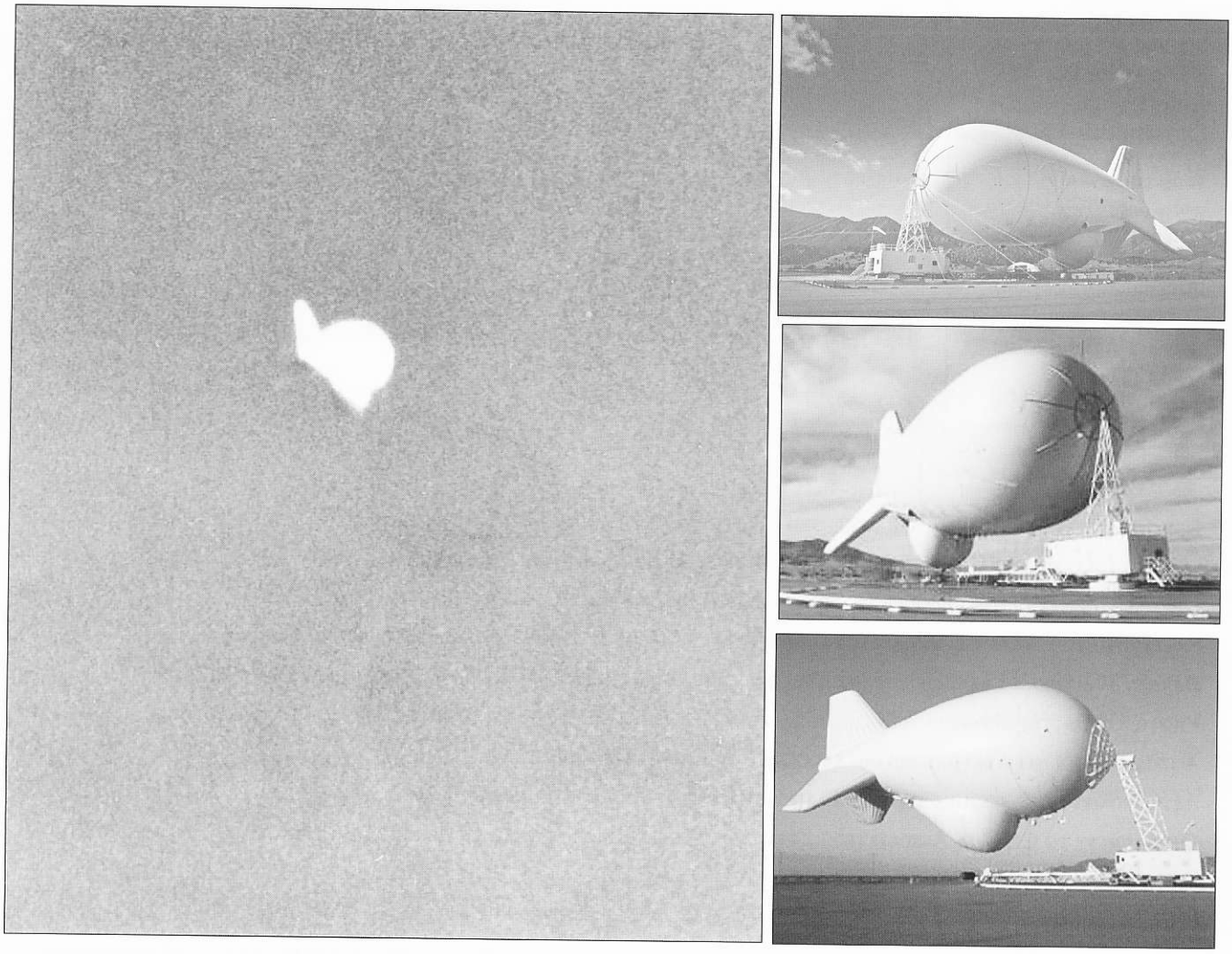
SNAPSHOT FROM A CRUISE



(Left) Photo taken February 20, 2002, at approximately 8:15–8:25 a.m. by a witness aboard a cruise liner off the southern coast of Puerto Rico. (Right) The probable explanation: a Tethered Aerostat Radar System used to provide radar data in support of the U.S. drug interdiction program.

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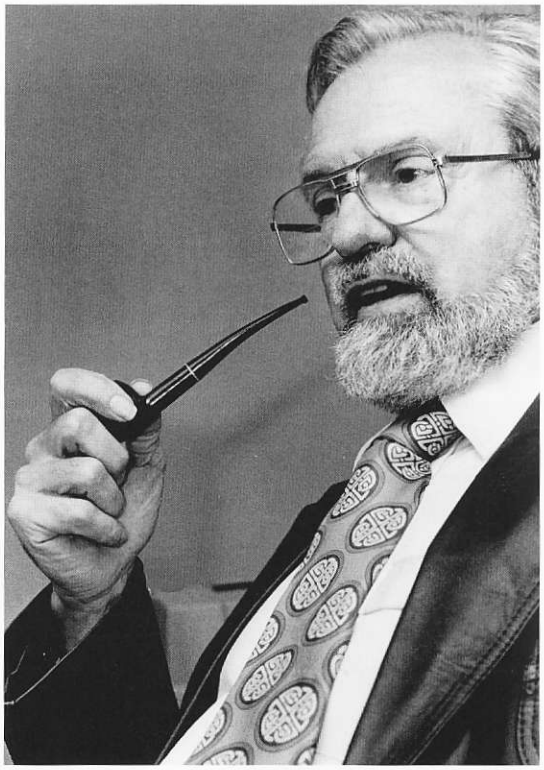

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LEVELLAND, TEXAS, 1957: CASE REOPENED

BY DONALD R. BURLESON

For a UFO investigator, one of the most rewarding pursuits, oddly enough, can be the process of reawakening interest in a cold case, even a case neglected for decades. One might think such an activity likely to be less than productive, since cold cases are supposed to be pretty well mined out for any information they may have held, but this is not always true. Sometimes it isn't so difficult to turn a cold case hot again.

Assuming, as most of us are inclined to assume in the field of UFO studies, that UFO-related events readily tend to get covered up by military or governmental authorities, it stands to reason that the main thing that makes some cases cold is the ongoing success of such coverup activities. It seems reasonable to assume that such concealment-minded authorities would dearly love for all cases to become and remain cold cases.

However, the problem for them is that the logic of coverups is generally very weak. Coverups are typically put together in considerable haste, and the resulting gaps in their logic are often highly susceptible to the onslaughts of investigators who have all the time in the world to unravel such things at leisure. Cold cases stay cold only if the apparent logic continues to hold, but frequently it doesn't, because there was originally little or no time to script the coverup so that it would withstand investigative efforts.

In particular, the matter of *official anxiety* is a problem for those who engineer coverups with a hope that their logic may continue to appear convincing.

We have all seen this problem arise in cases such as Roswell, New Mexico, where the official cant was that everyone was flustered over the triviality of a weather balloon, as General Roger Ramey assured a credulous world on July 8, 1947, in Fort Worth. The logic of this explanation collapses in a number of different ways, but perhaps nowhere so tellingly as in the fact that government officials threatened the management team of Roswell radio station KGFL with the loss of their broadcasting license if they continued to cover the UFO case then being reported. Certainly this would have been a level of official anxiety *totally* out of keeping with the circumstances, had Ramey been telling the truth with the weather-balloon explanation.

It was a similar lapse in logic that led me to suspect that there was a good deal more to the Levelland, Texas, UFO events of November 2–3, 1957, than we have been encouraged to believe. In March 2002, my wife Mollie and I took a three-day research trip to Levelland and ended up concluding, "suspicions confirmed."

It all started when we were stopping in Levelland on November 17, 2001, on the way back to Roswell from Lubbock, Texas, and I happened by sheer good fortune to speak with a bookstore manager named Allan Haney, mentioning my interest in UFOs in general and my familiarity in particular with the UFO events that had occurred in Levelland in 1957. To my surprise, Haney turned out to be an important witness, a good source of information. He had once interviewed Sheriff Weir Clem (now deceased), who, I was already aware, had played an important part in the 1957 events. Also, Haney had gone to school with the sheriff's daughter Sammie, so that he remembered the family very well. He mentioned that the sheriff and his deputy had themselves experienced the EM effect—car engine stalling, headlights dimming—reported by so many other Levelland witnesses, and this piqued my interest right away, since the early investigative results compiled by NICAP advisor Walter N. Webb had not mentioned the EM effect in connection with the sheriff's own experience. See Richard H. Hall, ed., *The UFO Evidence* (Washington, D.C.: NICAP, 1964), p. 168. According to Haney, the mechanic who subsequently checked the sheriff's then new 1957 Plymouth Fury had said that he could find no reason why the car's engine should have stalled out the way it did.

Sheriff Weir Clem

But for me the important indication that more things awaited discovery was Haney's recalling that Sheriff Clem

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Location of the Frank Williams UFO site at a point where three roads come together.

Mollie Burleson at the landing site four miles east of Levelland where Jim Wheeler's engine died.

admitted to having been enjoined to keep silent about his experience. "I asked Weir Clem what had happened," Haney said, "and he wouldn't tell me, except to say that the FBI had told him not to say anything about what he had seen." This was the first I had ever heard of the sheriff's having been admonished not to talk about the affair, and that in itself was an interesting bit of new information, but more significantly it struck me immediately that this was too much official *angst* to be in keeping with the reported nature of the case. Haney himself recalled that, in the day or two following the Levelland incident, "there were FBI or Air Force investigators all over the place in their black cars with the blackwall tires and radio antennas sticking out all over them. You can't bring a car like that into a small town without everyone knowing within a matter of minutes that something strange is going on."

Indeed, the case itself always was rather striking, as most readers are no doubt aware. Briefly: reports began coming in to police dispatcher A. J. Fowler (now deceased) around 10:50 p.m. on Saturday, November 2, 1957, of an unidentified object seen near the major roadways around Levelland. A farm worker named Pedro Saucedo (also now deceased) reported a sighting he had while driving some four miles west of Levelland on Route 116 (now 114, the road skirting along the north edge of town), where a large glowing object was on the ground in a field to the north of the roadway. The object lifted and passed low and noisily over Saucedo's truck, as his motor and lights died.

Mollie and I were able to determine, comparing NICAP accounts with current maps and driving the country roads to verify where they came out, that the Saucedo sighting took place at the intersection of the present Route 114 and what is now called Five Mile Road, actually 5.3 miles west of the city limit sign on 114. Saucedo had seen the object in the field on the northeast side of the intersection.

About an hour after the Saucedo sighting, near midnight, Jim Wheeler, driving on the same Route 116 (114) but about four miles east of town, encountered a large, oval object actually at rest on the roadway; Wheeler's engine died and lights dimmed, but the lights came back up when the object on the road lifted off moving northward.

At about the same time, a witness named José Alvarez sighted a similar object on the road on what was then Route 51 (now U.S. 385) northeast of Levelland and just below the town of Whitharral.

A few minutes later, Newell Wright had a similar sighting on Route 116 (114) some miles east of Wheeler's sighting, and in all these instances the witnesses experienced the EM effect, now well-known but at the time virtually unheard of.

Around 12:15 a.m. a witness named Frank Williams had a sighting just south of the Alvarez sighting. He encountered an oval object on the roadway at a spot where three roads come together. This was an uncommon case of what one might call "pulsating EM effect," as Williams's vehicle lights alternately dimmed when the object brightened and vice versa.

About half an hour later, Ronald Martin actually watched an oval object land on Route 116 (114), and some 15 minutes after that, about 1:15 a.m., truck driver James Long saw an object on Farm to Market Road 1490, north of town.

Around 1:30 a.m., the sheriff himself with his deputy Pat McCulloch (like the sheriff, no longer with us unfortunately), took to the road to see what all the hubbub was about, and both saw the object aloft.

There were other sightings as well, including an incident to the northwest in Pettit where two farm combines died when an object passed overhead. (Unfortunately, many of the roadway witnesses were passers-through of whom nothing has been found since, and many key players in the drama have passed on.)

Even as extraordinary as these events were—at least half a dozen UFO *landings* on various roadways around Levelland in about two hours within a radius of 20 miles—it still struck me as strange that federal authorities would actually threaten the sheriff to keep his mouth shut about the whole thing, especially when the official explanation, from what scant formal investigation there was, turned out to be

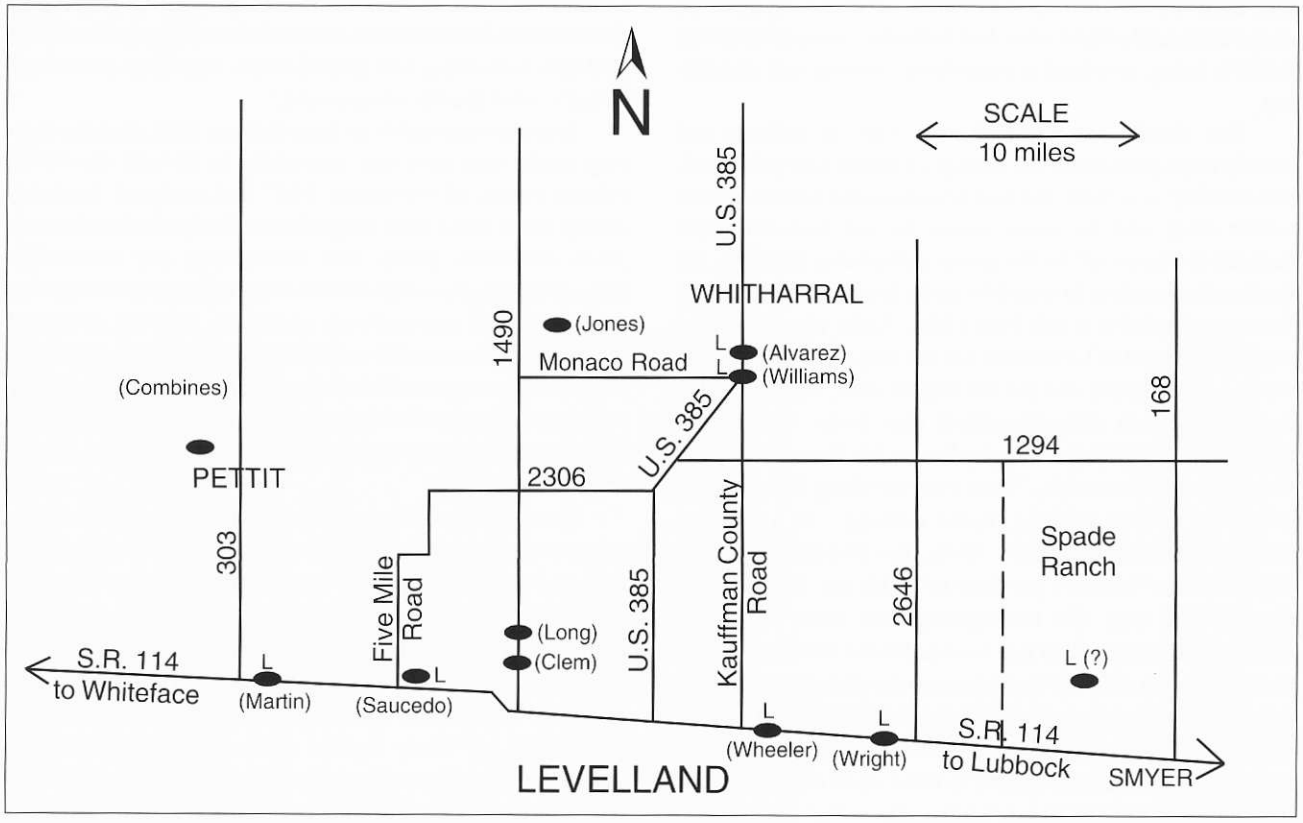
that the populace, unaccountably unnerved by thunderstorms in the area, had seen "ball lightning." The mind reels at the absurdity of this combination: "It was lightning, but heaven help you if you talk about it."

What I intuitively suspected upon speaking with Allan Haney, was that there had to be something more than just the sightings as described. What came to mind was physical landing-trace evidence. None had ever been reported in any account I had ever seen, but it seemed like a good guess. There was, in any event, something more to the case than had been previously thought.

The events of November 2–3, 1957, had apparently not been entirely the time-isolated events we have all heard described, because Haney also described a two-week-long series of sightings in the summer of 1957, when he and some friends had on a number of occasions climbed onto someone's roof to watch the extraordinary spectacle of three or four objects hovering over Reese Air Force Base near Lubbock (26 miles away to the east). Haney's father had known a Reese insider who disclosed that the base had tracked these objects, sending planes to try to intercept them, but "the objects would dart away at impossible angles and higher speeds" than the would-be interceptor planes could manage. The famous Levelland events had apparently been foreshadowed by these other sightings, of which the Air Force had been aware but had given no account. Quite possibly, when the mysterious road-landing object appeared on the night of November 2–3, it or something like it had been in the area before.

On March 25, 2002, taking advantage of spring break at the college where I work, Mollie and I returned to Levelland. It was remarkable how quickly my suspicions of possible landing-trace evidence came to fruition. We stopped at the library on the campus of South Plains College, and I interviewed Carolyn Reno, a member of the library staff. This was fortunate, because I was speaking with her only because we had just looked for the 1957 newspaper files and discovered that all issues of the *Levelland Daily Sun News* between November 3 and 7 were missing, with the existing files showing no relevant news stories; the *Hockley County News* was also missing for the entire year of 1957. When Mollie spoke with Stephen Henry at the *Levelland and Hockley County News Press*, he suggested that the pertinent items in the old *Daily Sun News* might well have been excised by someone before they were microfiched at the library, but all this sounds like similar cases encountered by UFO investigators before and since, where important newspaper files have vanished (one thinks of Lubbock and of Socorro).

But the disappearance of these newspaper files pales in significance beside what else Carolyn Reno told me. It seems that when she was around 10 years old—she said, "It was 1957, and I'm 99% sure it was in November"—her father, the late Johnny Thompson, took her to a spot "at the edge of town" (she remembered the place as a pasture where there were no buildings or houses around) and showed her



Map of Levelland area showing 1957 sightings. Oval marks show the locations; ovals with an "L" are landing sites. Based on a map drawn by Mollie Burleson.

a scorched spot in the prairie grass; at the time of the interview she could no longer recall exactly where the spot was, but described it as "at least 15 feet across." In talking about the size of this burn ring, she pointed to the counter at the front of the library and said that the burn spot was at least as large as the counter area, or maybe a little bigger; for comparative reference I paced the counter off as about 24 feet on a side. Reno further recalled her father's remark to her upon showing her the burn ring; he simply said, "That was where it landed." She also referred me to her mother, Lorene Thompson, and when I spoke later that day with Mrs. Thompson I learned that while she had not gone with her husband and daughter to the site itself, she remembered that he had taken his daughter to such a place, and she narrowed the location to an area some five or six miles out on Route 114 (then 116) toward Lubbock.

My excitement at hearing an apparent landing-trace account would have been even more acute had I known, which I soon would, that another witness not acquainted with Carolyn Reno would give me a closely correlated story, also describing a burn ring in the ground.

Naturally I was curious about Sheriff Clem's surviving family, and thanks to Harley Reid and Laura Woolam at the Levelland Area Chamber of Commerce I was able to find one of the late sheriff's daughters, Ginger (Clem) Sims. She graciously agreed to let me interview her on March 25 and again on the following day, speaking fondly of her father Sheriff Clem. Mrs. Sims was only about four years old at the time of the Levelland flap, and could not be entirely specific about dates and places now, but definitely remembered her father's being involved in something unusual and disturbing.

The sheriff, she recalled, was wary of ridicule and usually kept quiet about the strange events he had witnessed, but one day as a child she had accompanied him to a local coffee shop, and for some reason he had then and there decided to "open up" to the group gathered in the shop. He spoke of an incident in which he and a deputy named Chicho Barra responded to a call from a Mrs. Redd, who lived on a ranch southwest of Levelland. On the way, they saw a cigar-shaped object aloft, and the car engine died, with the lights coming back on after the object shot away. The sheriff reported this sighting to nearby Reese Air Force Base, and was told, for his trouble, "Don't say anything about any of this. You've seen nothing, heard nothing." In a separate instance, according to Mrs. Sims, the sheriff sighted an object that he "couldn't get close to" in his car. His daughter remembered only that the sighting was some time after midnight (and altogether this sounded to me like the November 2–3 event). On that occasion too the sheriff spoke with Air Force officials, who told him, in these exact words, "Drop it." The daughter recalls her father saying also that there were government people in town soon afterward, and this agrees well with Haney's account.

Remarkably, when I mentioned to Ginger Sims that Mollie and I had just driven over to Levelland from Roswell, she said, with reference to some of the Air Force people who had talked to her father, "I think some of them might have been from Roswell." It scarcely needs saying that this possibility is not without a certain fascination.

But the most striking information to come out of my interviews with Sims was her account of the sheriff's being called out to the Spade Ranch, an enormous ranch north of the road between Levelland and Lubbock (just northwest of the settlement of Smyer), to see a scorched spot in the ground there, a large ring burned into the prairie grass in annular form, that is, a ring apparently not burned solid in the middle. (By contrast, Reno described the burned spot her father took her to see as a solid circle. The possibility exists, of course, that there was more than one such site, though the locations from these two witness descriptions tend to match.)

Intriguingly, Sheriff Clem had also mentioned that there were dead cattle near the Spade Ranch burn ring, and that this was primarily why the ranchers there had called him out, since of course dead cows are a very serious matter to ranchers. The location correlates well with the spot described by Reno and her mother, locating the burn ring off the present Route 114 about five or six miles east of Levelland. The description of a burn ring by two independent witnesses—one primary (Reno) and one secondary (Sims)—more than satisfied my quest for accounts of trace evidence, especially given the dead cattle and the fact that Reno's father had specifically referred to a landing in connection with the site. In my second interview with Sims I mentioned that another witness (Carolyn Reno, though I did not name her) had been shown the burn ring and had been told that something had landed there, and Sims remarked, "That's what Daddy always said."

It seems reasonable to hypothesize, then, that the burn ring might well have had something to do with the UFO-related events of November 1957 in Levelland. Unfortunately, there was a large range fire on the Spade Ranch some years afterward, pretty well obliterating any reasonable hope of finding the original burn ring. Whether the range fire was accidental, one may only speculate. Anyway, if indeed the burn ring is causally related to the Levelland sightings, then for at least part of that collective event the nature of the sightings (already CE-2s, due to the repeatedly reported EM effect) progresses to even more tangible environment-changing trace evidence.

Since we depend largely upon Sheriff Clem's account, as passed along to his daughter, for the details of the burn ring and the dead cows, I took some pains to ascertain something of his character. Ginger Sims, who naturally could be expected to remember him fondly, significantly described him as a strong and usually fearless man. Even allowing for familial fondness, one gets the picture of a large, bold guy likely to stare down a rattlesnake and not hesitant to wade into a barroom brawl and come out on top when it was necessary to enforce the law. But Sims, who was very straightforward and helpful throughout the interviews,

(continued on page 25)

SPANISH MILITARY UFO ENCOUNTER

"FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR CHILDREN, LET'S NOT GET ANY CLOSER!"

BY VICENTE-JUAN BALLESTER OLMOS

The setting is the Officers' Pavilion of the Torrejón Air Force Base (Madrid), May 2000, where I was meeting with three military officers. Col. Bastida, Col. Muñoz, and his assistant, a major. The previous November, Col. Ángel Bastida, a good friend of mine primarily responsible for the declassification of the Spanish Defense UFO archives (1992–1999), had introduced me to another colonel, no less than the person currently in charge of the intelligence unit that handles UFO reports that come to the attention of the air military authorities. He was Col. Rafael Muñoz Pastor. In this English-language article I can reveal his full name for the first time, as he has since gone on to another professional position.

The subject of our conversation was, naturally, the UFO phenomenon and its investigation in Spain. Muñoz candidly remarked, "I, too have seen a UFO."

At this second meeting with him, I proceeded to a more formal inquiry, following the sequence of the UFO sighting form for pilot reports that my coworker Joan Plana and I designed in collaboration with investigator Richard Haines. Despite the details supplied by Muñoz concerning his experience, various uncertainties surround what happened, and I still seek to verify and establish some precise details of the sighting. In fact, the reason for a preliminary publication in Spanish was to provide the community of Spanish investigators the data I had gathered so far (with the only exception the identity of the witness) to solicit their help in the investigation. Alas, nothing has come of it.

RADAR AND AERIAL OBSERVATION

The case presumably took place in September 1975—Col. Muñoz thinks that Gen. Franco was already ill (the dictator died November 20, 1975)—and that it was definitely before he rose to the rank of captain (in 1976). Yet Muñoz thinks the month may have been as late as November, and he even wonders if it was 1974, not 1975. Such uncertainty hinders me from finding corroboration in military records—or at least makes it difficult—as well as with civilian data. With that reservation, I will say that at approximately 22:30 hours ("between ten and eleven at night") the then lieutenant of Aviation Rafael Muñoz was returning to the air base of Jerez (Cádiz province) on a night flight piloting a Grumman AN-1 antisubmarine airplane (Figure 1). The rest of the crew consisted of four men, the copilot (lieutenant), the mechanic (first sergeant), the radiotelegrapher, and the navigator. In those years he made many night flights and he does not remember the specific mission, even after consulting his flight book. Customarily they would leave in the morning, going to Ibiza or the air base of San Javier (Murcia province), and returning as the sun was setting.

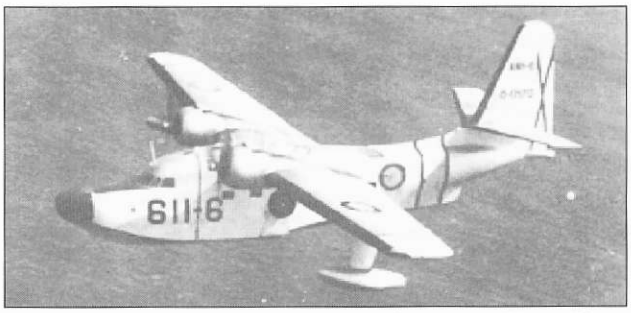


Fig. 1. Antisubmarine airplane Grumman UH-16B Albatross (AN-1 in the Spanish military designation).

They were flying at 3,500 feet altitude and were already on the landing approach to Jerez, when their Approach Control received a call from the Seville Control Center of Air Traffic (ACC). They passed it to military frequency to speak directly with the airplane. The civil air controller reported that they had on the radar screen an echo located over Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cádiz province), and asked if anything could be made out from the position of the aircraft. Crew members responded in the affirmative: They were seeing a luminous phenomenon in that direction. "Subsequently, military control ordered us to proceed with its identification," Col. Muñoz indicated.

The Grumman then changed course and headed toward Sanlúcar. The crew sighted a "round light, brilliant red in color and with yellowish edges," of solid appearance. They proceeded to get closer for their reconnaissance. When they were at an estimated distance between four and five nautical miles from Sanlúcar, with the object at a height of some

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1,000 feet above sea level, the red ball with a yellow glow ascended vertically some 10,000 or 20,000 feet. "We had to look vertically to see it," said the colonel, making an unambiguous gesture. Seville Control immediately contacted the aircraft to request visual confirmation of the object's ascent. The uncommon variation in altitude was evident on the airport radar. Obviously, radar confirmed the object's striking movements.

Asked about the apparent size of the luminous object, the colonel gave confusing answers. Though the initial choice on the form that most closely fit was that of a tennis ball, later he compared it more closely to that of a "golf ball" whose standard size is not less than 42 mm (1.6 inches), which allows us to attempt to determine its real dimensions.

Considering the two previously cited measures of distance to the UFO, calculations point to a true—and extraordinary—diameter between 520 and 650 meters (1,700–2,132 feet). On another occasion, the witness quoted separation distances of three or even seven miles, which would give diameters of 400 and 900 meters (1,312–2,952 feet), respectively. We should take these measures with great caution, given that the many years elapsed has substantially eroded memory of the events, and there is a great margin of error in the witness's estimates. For example, in another telephone interview, when speaking of distances and dimensions, he indicated to us that initially "about 30 km [18.6 miles] away, the size seemed like a golf ball, but when we were closer, about 4 or 5 km away [2.5–3 miles], it would now be like a tennis ball," which casts doubt on the previously provided measurements.

With these new data, which are not consistent, the diameter of the luminous phenomenon would be between 2,100 meters (6,890 feet, at the beginning, its greatest distance) and 510 meters (1,673 feet, at the end, its closest distance). Data unreliability notwithstanding, these figures, at least, give us an idea of the immense volume of the mass of light that was under observation.

That night there was a moon, to the left of the object, and its reflection was visible in the sea. In Figure 2 we have

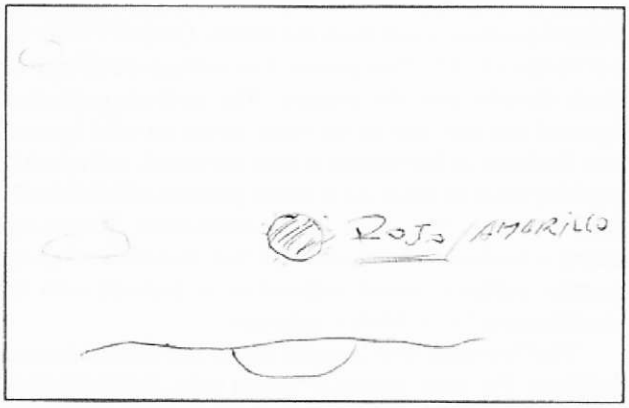

Fig. 2. Drawing by the witness. The UFO positioned over Sanlúcar de Barrameda, with handwritten notation of color, red/yellow. In the upper left corner, the moon and, below, its reflection on the sea.

Fig. 3. Northrop fighter F-5A Freedom Fighter, the type of aircraft used in the interception of the UFO.

the initial scene, drawn by the witness. Muñoz told us that the next day the provincial press gave an account of the sighting. The *Diario de Cádiz* or *Diario de Jerez* (his memory is not certain) briefly reported that numerous residents of Sanlúcar had also seen the strange luminous phenomenon from the terraces of the cafes in the city. The magnitude of the light must have been truly enormous, since Lt. Muñoz's wife managed to see it from Jerez de la Frontera, about 30 kilometers away. Because of the uncertainties in the dates, I have been unable to find any local press corroboration of the sighting up to now.

Let us return to the aerial sighting. In the face of the brave attitude of the pilot, a young man no more than about 30, the older mechanic on board (who was 40-odd years old and lacked the pilot's sense of adventure) surprised him by saying something that he has never forgotten: "For the sake of your children, my lieutenant, let's not get any closer!"—a phrase by which the colonel brought back to life the drama of the situation as he vividly recalled it before the three of us (the two officers and me) who were listening to him.

Scramble

Given the circumstances, that is, a strange light detected by civilian radar and sighted from a military airplane, an F-5A aircraft was ordered to take off on an intercept mission from the Morón Air Force Base (Seville province). Apparently, the pilot of this twin-jet fighter and attack plane (Figure 3) also verified the existence of the strange aerial phenomenon. I suspect that he made a written report of what we presume was a failed mission.

When the order to scramble was given, the Grumman began its return. "We could see as far as the VOR of Jerez" (an aeronautical reference point located 12 km NNE of the Jerez airport, next to the Seville-Cádiz highway). The airplane finally landed between 11 and 12 p.m., but not before first "making racetrack" (a circling flight while waiting), in case it would give them time to see the takeoff of the interceptor. It appears that the UFO was visible for a long period of time, possibly exceeding 45 minutes. Such a long duration suggests a conventional explanation, though, I must confess, one that escapes me.

Muñoz noted this incident in the "Observations" sec-

Fig. 4. Cols. Ángel Bastida (left) and Enrique Rocamora (right), who oversaw the declassification process of the official UFO files of the Spanish Air Force, pose with the writer at General Air Headquarters in Madrid.

tion of the routine report of his mission, though "there was no follow-up in the Unit" (Air Force Wing 22). The colonel of the base remitted it to the Second Air Region, based in Seville, whence no investigation at all was activated. Even though there was no specific report submitted to central Air Staff, the colonel remarked to me recently, "I looked for it among the declassified files, and it wasn't there." He is referring to originals of the declassified UFO reports he had in custody. He could not find it because no such report was ever passed to the top levels of the organization.

This is an example of an undetermined number of official UFO reports that never left the military installations where they occurred, or whose course was aborted at the headquarters of the respective Air Region. These reports never reached the Air Force Headquarters in Madrid, specifically the Air Staff Division which has taken custody of all UFO documentation since 1962. I call these the missing cases. As with this sighting, others have been lost but, in my judgment, not a great many. It is a bureaucratic loss that is due precisely to official apathy toward this subject, contrary to what some yellow-press advocates have maliciously spread in order to undermine the success of the declassification process in Spain—a process, by the way, which is not yet totally finished.

The report required a third meeting with Col. Muñoz, held in October 2000, as well as a subsequent telephone conversation, to pose new questions and refine some information. I have not forgotten the possible complementary information that the co-pilot of that flight 25 years ago could provide. Because of my interest in the sighting, the witness has already spoken with him, and he tells me that he does not seem to remember any more than he (Muñoz) does. The colonel promised to give him a copy of the sighting questionnaire. I hope that he will respond and that this additional testimony can provide some new aspect, pin down other details, and confirm the events in general. Given that the crew did not regularly work together, it is unfortunately not possible to know who the other members were that day.

If it were possible to locate press reports, we could look into the radar detection, the fighter plane, and other relevant matters in the official records. In short, we could pursue new leads, which now are not feasible unless we know with certainty the date of the incident.

In the End, an Enigma

The first thought that comes to the analyst's mind for a phenomenon of this colossal volume, would be to ascribe it to the appearance of an alkaline, artificial cloud in the sky. Such a cloud would be part of the Spanish space program, being released from rockets launched from the El Arenosillo test center located in the town of Mazagón, in the nearby province of Huelva. But according to available information, no night launches occurred in the months of September to November from 1974 to 1976.

This UFO sighting, though distant in time and based exclusively on the memory of a single person, seems valid, but it is a fragile one in terms of actual evidence. Moreover, a reader of the Spanish version of the present report has indicated to us that the Seville ACC center did not have a secondary radar (less a primary one) until 1983, which adds another level of uncertainty to the accuracy of Muñoz's memory. Recall, in this context, how he provided different distance and size estimates.

Although interesting, it frankly cannot be considered a high-strangeness case, an inexplicable UFO phenomenon, unless we have the corroboration of other witnesses on the ground and in the air who agree with the above description. Then our task will be to determine if there is a conventional alternative to the phenomenon. If then we are unable to find a solution, this case could be a major Spanish military UFO case. As it stands today, it is just another piece of the puzzle.

Acknowledgments

To Pedro Redón (CEI), José Ruesga (Anomaly Foundation), Manuel Borraz, Antonio Aparicio, and Joan Plana. To colonel (now General) Ángel Bastida and to Col. Rafael Muñoz. Thanks also to Richard Heiden for an excellent translation. ✦

REMEMBER THE SHAVER MYSTERY?

"I repeat, with the most positive finality, the caverns DO exist, and they are incredibly extensive, so that the possible population (were not so many dead!) could be THOUSANDS of times that of the surface of the earth, because it consists of so very many tiers of caves. . . . The caves are connected by broad highways, carved from the solid rock for thousands of miles, the whole inner earth being a vastly complicated network of tunnels connecting literally thousands of great caves as large as any surface city, and some so large as to dwarf New York City to insignificance."

—Richard S. Shaver, *The Hidden World* (1961)

GREENE COUNTY CLOSE ENCOUNTER

BY JOHN P. TIMMERMAN

Editor's note: In the past few issues we published three articles by Michael Swords detailing numerous UFO experiences recorded by John Timmerman in his travels with the Center for UFO Studies UFO Exhibit. These excursions into "The Timmerman files" presented almost the complete range of UFO reports, from simple nocturnal lights to much more complex sightings involving seeming interaction between the UFO phenomenon and witnesses.

To continue our adventure with the collected cases uncovered by John Timmerman, we reprint here an article that originally ran in the April/May 1985 CUFOS Associate Newsletter. The sighting is another example of the intriguing reports received by John (although not through the exhibit, in this instance). The case involves a close encounter, with the UFO coming very near the witnesses and causing reactions from some of the animals on their farm. Close-encounter reports appear to be less common now than 20 years ago when this sighting occurred. Perhaps we should send John out with another exhibit to see what we might be missing among those current sightings that go unreported.

An article about UFO photographs taken by Bob Giglio in New Hampshire appeared in the February 1981 issue of *McCall's*. It generated a number of interesting sighting reports from throughout the country to the CUFOS office. In the August 1981 issue of the *CUFOS Associate Newsletter,* we excerpted a portion of one of them which came to us from a farm housewife in southwestern Indiana.

I have recently received from this witness several photographs of the site showing where the lights appeared and the direction of movement near their home and farm buildings. Because the sighting was so well described by the witness, was observed by two adults and their daughters, was an apparent close encounter, and involved animal reaction, we present it here in more detail. . . . I will quote directly from the letter, received March 10, 1981:

> My husband and I live on a 255-acre farm in Greene County, 2 miles southeast of Bloomfield, Indiana.

After reading the article in *McCall's* magazine, we felt we should report our sighting. Earlier, we had no address or number to call, and family and friends are polite listeners, but of no help in this instance.

On October 26, 1980, at about 7:00 p.m., we experienced what Dr. Hynek terms a "close encounter of the second kind." (Since the sighting we have read his book.)

At about 6:45 p.m. Sunday, I returned home with my young girls from visiting my mother and grocery shopping. As I was getting the children into the house and unloading the groceries from the car, I noticed a beautiful bright orange star low in the southwestern sky.

I was in a hurry to get the children settled in to watch Walt Disney at 7:00 and I had several chores to get done before then. My husband was picking corn down in the bottom land away from the house, and I was expecting him up, tired and hungry, at any time. And I was late. Had I not been in such a hurry, I might have realized the star looked out of place. It was so pretty and I tried to keep an eye on it while I worked in the kitchen. As I went out to feed and water the chickens, I just stopped to stare and marvel at how pretty it was. It crossed my mind that the Star of Bethlehem could not have been more beautiful.

Back inside at the kitchen window, I saw my husband's tractor lights slowly coming up the lane from the bottom. I was taking a roast out of the oven when I realized my husband was driving right up to the house at a breakneck speed. He burst through the door just as Walt Disney came on the TV and said that a flying saucer was chasing him. My first thought was that he had seen the big star and was teasing me, so I laughed at him. He looked at me like I was crazy. That's when I noticed that he was white as a sheet, shaking and yelling at me to look out the window, So, I looked.

What I saw was something coming in for a landing in the field behind our barn. I grabbed my coat and ran outside to stand on the back porch to watch. The star was gone and hovering in the field maybe two or three hundred feet away was some kind of aircraft with two large white lights in front like headlights on a car. It sat there several minutes during which my husband was telling me what had happened to him.

John P. Timmermen is treasurer of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies. He lives in Lakewood, Ohio.

Fig. 1. This photo was taken behind the barn and shows the pig barn in the center and the house on the right. The position of the lights has been drawn in as two dark circles above the barn.

In between the point where I had seen his tractor lights earlier and the barn, he had looked up at the sky and seen a shooting star that had left an orange trail. Suddenly, he realized the star was going up and not curving downward. He felt the sensation that someone was watching him and he turned in his seat to look. An orange object in the sky behind him suddenly dimmed into two lights and was heading toward him at a high rate of speed. My husband pulled the throttle out all the way and zoomed toward the house. He didn't really think he would make it to the house. While he is telling me this, the object is hovering about twenty feet in the air and absolutely motionless.

When it started to move, it went for ward and upward so smoothly I felt it would have moved in any direction with equal ease.

The object passed about twenty feet above the barn, making no sound and the lights making no light. When it was over the barn roof, the sows with baby pigs in the barn jumped up and began wild grunting and knocking about in their pens. They settled down immediately after the object cleared the roof. The object [was] now coming very slowly toward the front of our house and yard. My husband has gone back into the house to watch from the front windows, my children are crying, and I am on the back porch having the time of my life.

The object can be described as two full moons spaced about 12 feet apart with a flashing red light in back like a lopsided triangle. Each white light could have been three feet in diameter and the white was so intense but nothing around lit up. It seemed as if the light was somehow contained within itself. The object was at treetop level now and passed to the right of our security light. There was no reflection of metal any-

Fig.2. This photo was taken from the back porch of the house. At the time, there were many pigs on this side of the barn, but the witness said they were not upset by the object. However, when the object was above any point of the barn, the pigs inside reacted violently. When the object cleared the barn roof, they immediately became quiet. The position and trajectory of the lights above the barn has been added.

where. The lights were all that could be seen, but I got the distinct impression that they were connected to something huge.

The object made no sound except for a faint whistle as it passed me by. I mean very faint. Either it was my own excitement or I actually felt the quality of the air change, possibly charged with electricity or sterilized somehow. The feeling only lasted a minute and could have been my imagination. I did look very closely at the white discs and thought I saw what reminded me of cuts or the facets in a diamond.

I lost sight of the object when I was standing on the back porch. It disappeared behind the roof line of the house. When I ran a few seconds later to the front yard, there was nothing. There is a small woods and a 90-acre open field in front of our house. I should have been able to follow an aircraft with my eyes for miles.

About two weeks afterward, our sighting was being told around, although we did not go public with this, we talked to people close to us. We experienced enough disbelief from family and friends to warn us how most people would react. Anyway, a neighbor had seen something strange over our place and like most people, he didn't want to be the first to say something. But he did come over and tell us that he saw a lighted object pass over our farm and at about where he thought our barn should be. Another neighbor and her teenage daughter and friend were driving home from Bloomington about twenty miles from here that same night and about the same time. They saw a lighted object flying very low and they were curious enough to pull off the road to look at it. They assumed it was low-flying plane with its landing lights on, as a few miles away there was a county airport. But it was so strange that they shut off the car to listen to it to help them decide what it was and then realized it wasn't making any sound. It kind of spooked them and they got back in and left.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Had we known where to turn, we would have reported this right away. I really felt that someone should know but most people don't want to hear what they can't understand. That's fine for them, but my husband and I need answers, information and maybe a little support from people who have had similar sightings.

This report contains many of the commonly reported elements of sightings from many other times and locations. Researchers will easily recognize them:

- a variety of emotional reactions (fear on the part of the husband and children, curiosity and excitement on the part of the wife);
- hovering of the object during part of the sighting;
- changes in the appearance of the object (an orange moving light became two white lights spaced like headlights on a car, with a flashing red light adjacent to them);
- the light not illuminating objects in the environment;
- no supporting hardware visible, although the lights moved as if attached to something;
- the absence of sound;
- the apparent anticipation of the encounter (the husband turning in his tractor seat because of some feeling that he was being watched);
- the animal reaction coincident with the proximity of the object (the sows with baby pigs reacting and settling down immediately after the object cleared the roof of the barn);
- the feeling that the quality of the air had changed for a few moments; and
- disc-shaped light sources.

The other commonly noted elements were the reluctance to believe by family and friends, the need on the part of the witnesses for support from others who have had similar sightings or who will believe they are telling the truth about a real event they have observed, and the need for answers and information.

Answers to this and similar sighting reports have been sought unsuccessfully for years. Much information has been accumulated and, although it is mainly anecdotal, it tends to support the conclusion that this and similar UFO sighting reports are real, at least in the minds of the reporting witnesses, and that the UFO phenomenon deserves serious scientific study and analysis in our time, not 50 or 100 years from now. The results may be of great consequence for the future of life on our planet. ✦

GIANT BLIMPS

It has been 65 years since the ill-fated *Hindenburg* burst into flames and deflated the chances that lighter-than-air ships would become anything more than a curious footnote in aviation history. Except for the limited use of the Goodyear blimp as a flying billboard, dozens of efforts to revive the glory of dirigibles have fallen flat.

But now, Pentagon officials believe that airships could play a crucial role in protecting the United States from attack. They have quietly asked the country's largest defense contractors to develop giant unmanned craft — two to three times as big as Goodyear's gasbag — that would ring the continent. Hovering high in the stratosphere, beyond the reach of unfriendly forces, such blimps would be used to spot incoming enemy missiles and planes.

The airships would be far more complicated than any built before, and it could take seven or eight years before they are deployed. But Pentagon and industry officials say technological advances, including highly efficient solar cells, make them optimistic that the giant blimps can be added to the U.S. arsenal.

—*Los Angeles Times,* November 11, 2002

SNAPSHOT FROM A CRUISE: AN AEROSTAT SIGHTING

BY JOHN P. TIMMERMAN AND MARK RODEGHIER

We no longer receive many interesting daylight photographs of UFOs at CUFOS. That itself is an interesting fact that we won't dwell on in this article. So when we received the photograph on the cover from a businessman in Missouri, our interest was piqued. All photo cases are immediately suspected of being a hoax just on basic principles, but this photo certainly had all the earmarks of being genuine. The witness seemed reliable, he gave a coherent and consistent sighting report, and the photo was impressive. The UFO on the photo doesn't have one of the commonly reported shapes, but then again, it doesn't look like a plane, either, or a standard blimp.

We first describe the circumstances surrounding the photo and witness report, then detail our investigation.

THE SIGHTING

The witness, R.D., was on a cruise with his wife that left San Juan, Puerto Rico, on February 19, 2002. (The cruise was a reward for his sales success the previous year.) Their ship left San Juan in the evening, and by the next morning they were on the south side of Puerto Rico traveling roughly parallel to the coast. R.D. and his wife were getting dressed about 9 a.m. to go to a meeting.

R.D. looked out the window of the cabin to the north (toward Puerto Rico) and saw something odd. He said, "I looked out the window and I thought at first I saw a cloud . . . and I though . . . that's very strange there [is] a cloud because the sky is perfectly clear." The "cloud" appeared so unusual that he decided to take a closer look.

"And so I went out on the deck and looked at it and it seemed to be an irregularly-shaped object, just sitting there, and a cloud you would expect to move and I thought that's unusual. I got my binoculars. I looked at the object and I saw that metallic-like wing coming from it as if it was being absorbed by the two other white objects there." The object was high in the sky, which meant there were no reference points to use, so R.D. couldn't really estimate a size.

R.D. called his wife, who came out on deck and saw the same thing he did. At this point, since the object was stationary, he decided he had time to try to take a photo. He got his camera, a Nikon 35 mm with a 300 mm Nikor lens attachment. Since the ship was moving relatively slowly, and the object wasn't moving at all, he had plenty of time to get the camera out of its case, get the object in focus, and take one color picture. The Nikor lens allowed him to shoot a photo that showed the shape of the object quite clearly.

Since R.D. had a meeting to attend, and the object wasn't doing anything special, he then put his camera away and left to attend the meeting. There was no one else around him and his wife on deck that morning, although he wishes he had found someone else to verify what he was witnessing.

But, as he told us, "And I just didn't think about it anymore until maybe a couple hours later. It just began to bother me or bug me that is was totally unexplainable and did not fit, you know, logic, what I saw." R.D. had never believed in UFOs before his sighting, but he didn't know what to think of what he had seen.

We asked him what the object might have been if it was something mundane. He said, "It's too bizarre. . . . I don't know any type of an aircraft I've ever seen before in my life." He then added, "and I don't think it could have been a balloon, either, because it's too many different shapes to it and it was too stationary."

As you can see from the photograph, the object doesn't resemble an aircraft, and it does have an odd shape for a balloon. For example, it doesn't look like the Goodyear blimp or a similar airship. So we couldn't readily explain what R.D. had photographed.

THE INVESTIGATION

R.D. contacted us just a few days after the sighting, which made us hopeful that we could conduct a complete investigation. There are two complimentary approaches when

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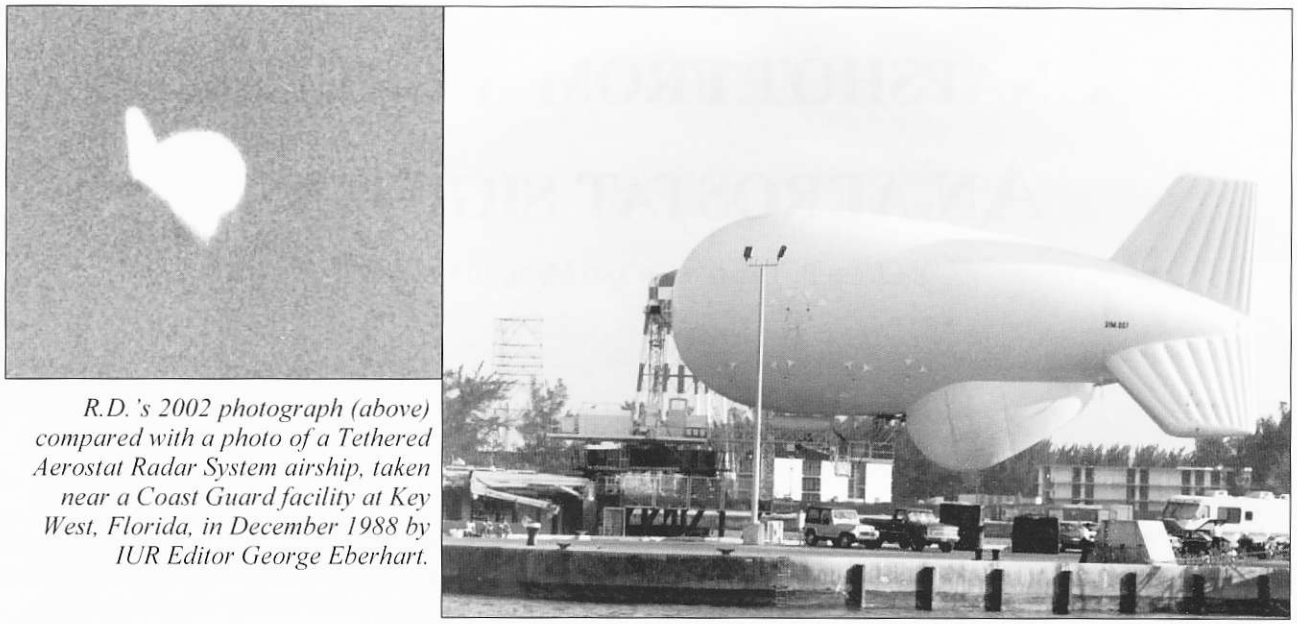


R.D.'s 2002 photograph (above) compared with a photo of a Tethered Aerostat Radar System airship, taken near a Coast Guard facility at Key West, Florida, in December 1988 by IUR Editor George Eberhart.

investigating a UFO photo case. The photo negative can be subjected to various technical analyses to determine whether it is a fake. If ruled genuine, then the photo can be studied to learn more about the object itself (such as brightness, possible size, etc.). At the same time, the circumstances surrounding the taking of the photo can be investigated, which ideally would include a visit to the site itself.

We did request that one of the CUFOS photographic consultants do some basic analysis. The results showed no evidence of trick photography, consistent with the character of the witness.

Given that the photo was taken from a Radisson cruise line vessel, the *M/S Seven Seas Mariner,* in the Caribbean, it was impossible to visit the site. One of us (J.P.T.) contacted the cruise line office to try to locate the exact position of the ship on the morning of February 20. While quite friendly, the staff was of no help, and said that they couldn't get a location "within 100 miles." This seems odd, and we are positive that the ship itself keeps a log of its position. The staff didn't offer to put us in touch with the ship's captain, and we didn't press the issue.

To resolve this case, we needed to determine whether the object R.D. photographed was, while unusual, something man-made. Despite the peculiar appearance, the object never did anything UFO-like, as it remained motionless throughout the five minutes or so of the sighting. Thus we had to suspect that it might be some type of aerial device, albeit it an unusual one.

We enlisted the aid of another CUFOS consultant who was willing to search for objects with a similar shape to the one in R.D.'s photograph. In short order, he located a likely suspect.

In the 1980s, the war on drugs waged by the United States was being undermined by aircraft flying illegally over the southern borders of this country, bringing in large quantities of drugs from South America. The government determined that it needed more radar coverage of the border regions and so approved the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS), which placed powerful radars in balloons to monitor the border.

An aerostat is a large fabric envelope filled with helium. Three sizes of aerostats have been built, with the *smallest* being twice the size of the Goodyear blimp (measuring 175 feet long by 58 feet across). They are tethered to the ground by a cable, and can rise up to 15,000 feet in altitude. This allows radar coverage up to 200 miles distant.

Because an aerostat is tethered, it need not be shaped like a typical airship (though the central portion is blimp-shaped). The odd shape of an aerostat is due to the requirements of carrying a radar system and a power system for the radar and a subsystem to maintain constant pressurization (see the Federation of American Scientists website at www.fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/airdef/tars.htm for additional information and more photos). Nowadays, aerostats are also used to look for evidence of terrorist flights as well.

The aerostat is launched from a large, circular launch platform by a control vehicle containing a winch with 25,000 feet of tether cable.

It was immediately obvious that the aerostats looked very similar to the object in the photo taken by R.D. To confirm this identification, we checked the location of deployed aerostats. There are currently 11 sites, including one in Lajas, in southwestern Puerto Rico. Although Radisson was unable to give us a location for the *Seven Seas Mariner* on the morning of February 20, 2002, R.D. said that they were sailing south of the coast of Puerto Rico, which makes it plausible that they were near the aerostat site at Lajas.

The aerostat hypothesis also explains why R.D.'s object wasn't moving, as aerostats are basically stationary, save for a bit of drifting in the wind. But the aerostat was much too distant for R.D. to have seen the tethering cable that anchored the aerostat to its launch platform. ✦

BARNEY BARNETT'S CRASHED SAUCER: WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

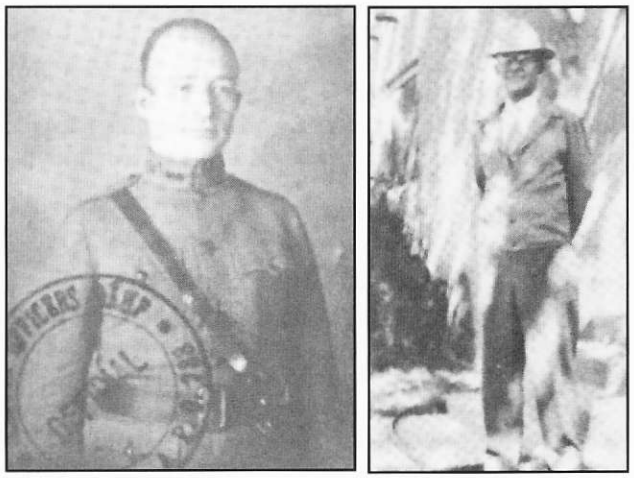
BY KEVIN D. RANDLE AND KARL T. PFLOCK

According to several associates and a family member, at various times during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the late Grady L. "Barney" Barnett told them of discovering a crashed flying saucer somewhere west of Socorro, New Mexico. Barnett was a solid citizen and, according to those recounting the story, wasn't known for spinning tall tales. Yet Barnett's claim, as related to UFO researchers by these secondhand witnesses, seems not to be true. Exhaustive investigative efforts have failed to turn up any evidence of a UFO crash where Barnett is said to have seen a downed saucer. There is strong evidence he couldn't have been anywhere near the sites toward Roswell, many miles to the southeast of Socorro, where something out of the ordinary definitely did fall to earth during the summer of 1947. So, barring the emergence of any new evidence to the contrary, his story must be discounted by those investigating reports of saucer crashes in New Mexico.

But where, other than his imagination, could Barnett have gotten the raw material for his account? As it happens, there was plenty of it available to him or anyone else who, for whatever reason, might have been tempted to invent a crashed-saucer incident.

BARNEY'S STORY

Barney Barnett was thrust onto the ufological stage with the publication of *The Roswell Incident* by Charles Berlitz and William L. Moore in 1980. Stanton T. Friedman claimed credit for uncovering the Barnett story, having first learned of it in October 1978, after giving a lecture in Bemidji, Minnesota. According to Friedman, two members of his audience, L. W. "Vern" Maltais and his wife Jean, approached him with a story about their late friend Barney Barnett. The Maltaises claimed that, in February 1950, Barnett had told them he had seen a crashed flying saucer and the bodies of its alien flight crew. Friedman was, of course, excited by this revelation.



Grady L. "Barney" Barnett as (left) an officer in World War I and at home in Socorro, New Mexico, in 1945. Photos from Mrs. Alice Knight.

The story was that Barnett, a U.S. Soil Conservation Service engineer, had, at some time in the late 1940s, been on the high desert west of Socorro, New Mexico, when a bright flash had drawn his attention to "a large metallic object" on the ground about a mile or so south of his location. Thinking an airplane might have crashed the night before, he hurried to the spot. What he found was no ordinary aircraft but, rather, a strange disk-shaped object. The thing, which Barnett never described in detail, was "a kind of disk," made of a metal that "looked like dirty stainless steel." It had been "split open by explosion or impact."

Barnett's attention was riveted on the bodies, inside the strange machine and sprawled on the ground close by. Barnett never made clear how many cadavers he saw, but he did say they were clad in gray, one-piece flight suits. The creatures were "quite small by our standards," and their

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Kevin D. Randle and Karl T. Pflock are longtime Roswell researchers who more often than not have been at odds with each other about the case. Randle's most recent book is Case MJ-12: The True Story Behind the Government's UFO Conspiracies *(Avon, 2002). Karl T. Pflock is the author of* Roswell: Inconvenient Facts and the Will to Believe *(Prometheus, 2001).*

heads were disproportionately large, round, and hairless, set with small, "oddly spaced" eyes. Whatever the creatures were and wherever they had come from, Barnett said they "were like humans but they were not humans."

While he was standing there, gazing at the bizarre beings and their ship, a group of archaeologists or archaeological students arrived. They didn't say much to Barnett, and according to the Maltaises, he didn't say much to them, but supposedly they did identify themselves as "part of an archaeological research team from some eastern university." Subsequently, someone suggested the group might have been from the University of Pennsylvania. Extensive and careful checks of the records have failed to confirm this, though students of archaeology at the university were with a couple such expeditions in the general area in 1947.

According to what the Maltaises told Friedman, within minutes, a military contingent arrived. The soldiers herded everyone on the scene away from the crash site. They were told what they had seen was secret and they were not supposed to talk about it with anyone. It was their patriotic duty to keep quiet. They were then escorted from the site.

Barney leaks

Over the years, Barnett leaked his story to a few people. In 1978, the Maltaises told Friedman they had first heard it in 1950. Alice Knight, Barney's niece, remembered Barney telling it "for years." William Leed, a military reserve officer from New York, said that in "the early 1960s," a fellow officer had told him about Barnett. Soon after, he traveled to Socorro to talk to Barney about the crash. When first interviewed, J. F. "Fleck" Danley, for whom Barnett had worked in 1947, was uncertain about when Barney had first told him about his experience. Later, he decided it had been "sometime in the early summer of 1947."

None of these people could offer much detail that would help pin things down. Knight, for example, believed that Barnett had first told her of the crash in the early 1950s. She was sure the story was true because, she said, Barney wasn't given to inventing tales or engaging in practical jokes.

Harold Baca, a neighbor of the Barnetts in the 1960s, claimed to have heard the story from Barney himself. Baca said Barnett told him he believed his chronic respiratory problems had developed from standing over the alien bodies and breathing the air. He claimed that something about the bodies or something from the ship had affected him. However, the record suggests his health problems actually developed as a result of his service in the First World War. Like so many other allied soldiers, he had been the victim of a German poison-gas attack.

A Barnett Roswell connection?

Barney Barnett died in 1969. It was clear to researchers pursuing the Roswell crashed-saucer case that the Barnett tale had surfaced well before Friedman became interested, before *The Roswell Incident* was published, and before the Roswell story had become well known, even among UFO researchers. Neither Barnett nor most of those who told researchers of his claims could have used *Incident* or any of the subsequent books and articles about the Roswell crash as a basis for the story.

There seemed to be nowhere to go with the Barnett tale, which was very frustrating for those researching the Roswell case who believed it was or may have been associated with that incident. It was of high interest because, if a connection could be established, it would link an extraterrestrial to Roswell by providing a witness who had seen not only an alien craft, but also the bodies of creatures not of this earth.

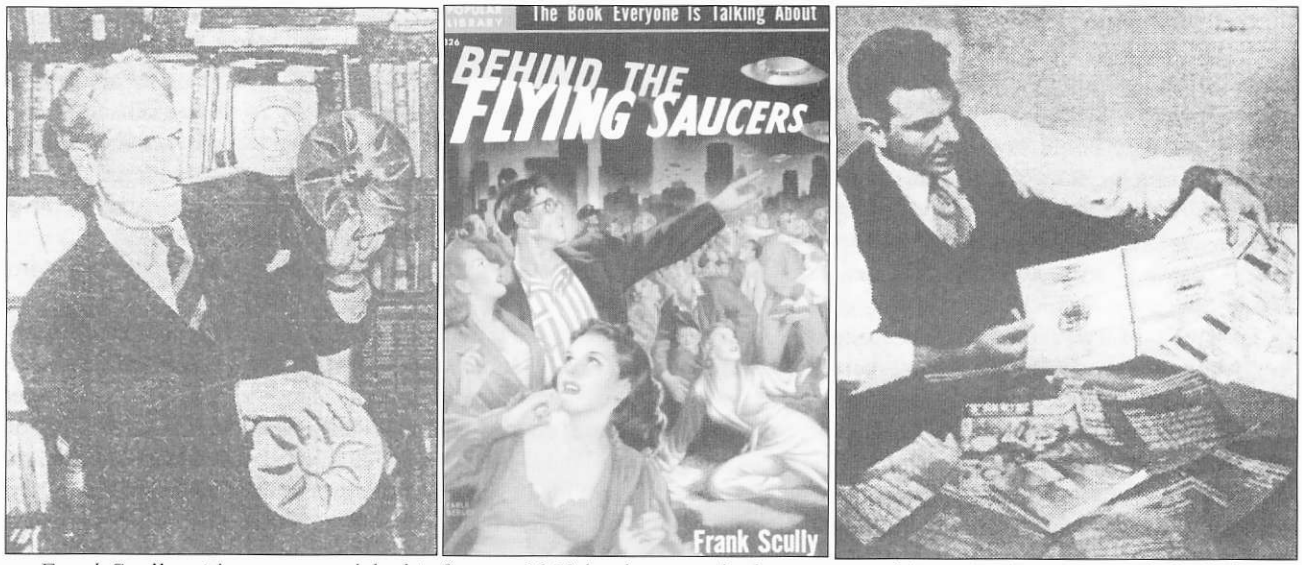
The Roswell case, as it existed when *The Roswell Incident* was published, consisted of a field littered with odd, not easily identified debris, much of it metallic. There were witnesses who claimed some of the material exhibited strange properties, but there was nothing to suggest that whatever had come to grief northwest of Roswell, near the town of Corona, was a craft from another world. Strange metallic debris was nothing more than strange metallic debris. Talk of wires that might have been fiber optics was nothing more than talk of wires, no matter what some alleged they could do. What was needed to move from strange stuff to extraterrestrial stuff was a witness to a crashed craft and, better yet, bodies. Barnett was both.

Unfortunately, there was nothing linking Barnett and his account to Roswell. Because most of those who recalled his story said Barnett had recounted it to them in the early 1950s, and another, Fleck Danley, said he might even have been told in 1947, Friedman and William L. Moore, one of the authors of *The Roswell Incident,* decided a Roswell connection was virtually certain. Friedman suggested two alien ships had collided in midair. One was destroyed, raining debris on the field near Corona, but the other remained airborne for more than one hundred miles, falling to the ground on the Plains of San Agustin, a vast and centuries-dry lake bed west of Socorro. That was what Barnett saw.

The tale told by a diary

In 1990, Alice Knight, who earlier had insisted she knew of no diary or other journal kept by either Barnett or his wife Ruth, found one. Searching through some stored boxes, she discovered a "daily reminder" book that Ruth had turned into a diary. Apparently the only year she kept such a journal was 1947.

On the dates that various persons have claimed and UFO researchers have concluded the Roswell object crashed, Barnett was in the wrong locations. According to Friedman and Moore, the crash occurred late on July 2. On July 3, when Barnett would have to have been on the scene of the crash to see what he claimed to have seen, his wife's diary placed him in the Soil Conservation Service office in Socorro.



Frank Scully with saucer models, his famous 1950 book on crashed saucers, and investigative reporter J. P. Cahn.

He couldn't have been out on the Plains to view the remains of an alien ship and its crew.

The other widely accepted crash date is July 4, given to Kevin Randle by the now completely discredited Frank Kaufmann, who claimed the Roswell saucer fell to earth late that night. Once again, we have the same problem. Barney would have to have been on the crash site on July 5. However, according to Ruth Barnett's diary, Barney was in Socorro, buying glass for the windows of the house he and Ruth were building. Quite apart from the problem of Frank Kaufmann's utter lack of credibility, Barney couldn't possibly have gotten out to the Plains, seen the crashed disk and dead crew, and after that returned to Socorro to do his shopping.

The only day in the first part of July that at first blush might fit is Tuesday, July 8. According to the diary, Barnett was in Pie Town, just beyond the western edge of the Plains and fairly close to the Arizona border. That, at least, put him out of the office and into the right area. Unfortunately, that also was the day Roswell Army Air Field announced its intelligence office had captured a flying saucer. If there were saucer wreckage recovered on the Plains, it would have been rounded up before this announcement. There would have been nothing for Barnett to see on the eighth.

A DEARTH OF DATA

There is still another problem with the Barnett tale. We are told the crash happened on the Plains of San Agustin, but with the exception of a few dubious examples, there is next to nothing on which to base an investigation. We and other researchers have only the accounts of secondhand witnesses as sources of information on what Barnett supposedly experienced, a far less than satisfactory situation in any investigative effort.

Over near Corona and in Roswell, numerous people knew something out of the ordinary had happened, and some of them even reported having seen and handled the strange debris. On the Plains, the closest anyone has come to independent verification of Barnett's story is the extremely vague recollection of an old cowboy named John Foard. He thought he recalled hearing of a crashed flying saucer, but couldn't tell investigators if he'd heard this before or after publication of *The Roswell Incident* in 1980.

All other sources on the Plains crash could be traced back to Barney Barnett, one way or another. This includes the dramatic yarn told by Gerald Anderson, who eventually was caught in a web of deceit and whose story has been rejected by most knowledgeable Roswell investigators.

Our interviews with various witnesses, conducted separately over a number of years, provided no clues as to the real timing of the crash itself, Barnett's alleged discovery, or when he told others his story. All that could be said with any certainty was that Barnett seems likely to have talked to a few people about a crashed and retrieved flying saucer and alien bodies well before such an idea had taken hold and gained credibility in the UFO-research community.

A SHAGGY SAUCER STORY

If, for whatever reason, Barney Barnett made up his tale, where might he have gotten the idea? Was there anything well-known to the general public or abroad in the popular culture in the late 1940s and early 1950s that could have fueled his imagination? The answer is a very definite yes.

In late 1949 and early 1950—October 12 and November 23, 1949, and January 11, 1950, to be exact—Frank Scully, a columnist for the Hollywood/show business trade paper *Weekly Variety,* had reported and promoted tales of crashed flying saucers in his "Scully's Scrapbook" column. Scully wrote that he had been told by unimpeachable sources in the late summer of 1949 that one of the mysterious flying saucers had crashed near Aztec, New Mexico, in the far northwest corner of the state. According to Scully's sources,

the craft and bodies of its diminutive crew had been recovered, and there was a gigantic government program to investigate and exploit the find, while keeping everything under wraps.

It certainly could be argued plausibly that a civil engineer living in Socorro, New Mexico, would be unlikely to be a *Variety* reader. However, on January 9, 1950, *Time,* then *the* national news magazine, published a two-column article that keyed on the excitement generated by "The Flying Saucers Are Real," Donald Keyhoe's blockbuster essay in the January 1950 issue of *True* magazine, in which he declared the saucers not only were real but were spaceships from another planet. The *Time* article incorporated a much-condensed version of the Aztec story, obviously gleaned from Scully's first two columns. The recovery of the bodies was reported, as were some of the details of the purported government retrieval of the craft. Although the article was written in the usual wry style *Time* used and still uses for such subjects, the crashed-saucer story was presented in a fairly straightforward manner, with no suggestion the tale might be a hoax.

Time certainly was a magazine with sufficient circulation and wide readership that, in 1950, Barnett could easily have seen it. He may well even have been a subscriber. *Time* was one of many mass-circulation magazines read and relied upon by millions in an age before television became the overwhelming source of entertainment and information for most Americans. It and many others were subscribed to, bought from thousands of newsstands, and found in virtually every doctor's office, beauty salon, and barbershop from coast to coast—including those in Socorro, New Mexico. It was a similar situation with *True,* a very popular men's action-adventure magazine that featured exposés, war and true-adventure stories, and other such factual if often highly sensational reporting. It requires no stretching of probability to suggest that Barney Barnett could have read the *Time* article; he may have seen Keyhoe's piece in *True* as well.

Then, in September 1950, Frank Scully's book *Behind the Flying Saucers* hit the bookstores with a very big splash. In it, Scully elaborated on the saucer-crash accounts he had published in his *Variety* column, detailing a number of alleged UFO crashes in Arizona and New Mexico and exposing the actions reportedly taken by U.S. military authorities to recover and cover up the evidence. Did Barnett read this highly controversial, much publicized, and very successful instant bestseller? Or, at the very least, did he see one or more of the many news accounts and reviews of the book and interviews with its author that appeared nationwide? While we will never know for certain, it's certainly a reasonable possibility.

Another popular magazine of the time was *Pageant.* One of us, Karl Pflock, is old enough to remember it well. Those of our readers who aren't should think *Reader's Digest* with, to use a 1950s term, a "racy" spin. The October 1950 *Pageant* included a 20-page condensation of Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers,* preceded by a full lead-in page that sensationally presented the article as "The most amazing story ever published! . . . The full 3-year report on Flying Saucers by Frank Scully . . . What they are . . . Who flies them . . . Where they're from . . . Why Air Force censorship . . . Scientists who saw them . . . Men who dismantled them . . . Might they destroy us. . . ." Once again, we have the crashed-saucer tale featured in a ubiquitous, widely read periodical—a magazine that Barney Barnett could easily have run across in any of a number of places, including his own living room.

In 1951, Bantam Books published the paperback *Saturday Review Reader,* reprinting articles from the previous year's issues of *Saturday Review.* Included was "In a Saucer from Venus," a review of *Behind the Flying Saucers* by Roland Gelatt. While Gelatt eviscerated the book, he also provided a detail-rich summary of the crashed-saucer story. Either the original issue of *Saturday Review* in which Gelatt's review appeared or the paperback reprint collection could have provided fuel for Barnett's imagination.

The September 1952 issue of *True* featured a long article about the alleged Aztec UFO crash. The story included a detailed account of the recovery of the craft and bodies and included photographs and other illustrations, among them a sketch of the Aztec craft drawn by Silas M. Newton, Frank Scully's principal source. This story touched upon other accounts of crashed saucers in the desert southwest, although its author, investigative reporter J. P. Cahn, concluded that they were all part of an elaborate hoax or exploited by hoaxers.

Cahn also demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the basis for Scully's story of crashed saucers at Aztec and elsewhere was an elaborate and imaginative confidence game perpetrated by Newton and a couple of co-conspirators. Once again, in the 1950s, *True* was a staple among the magazines in barbershops and other such establishments. It also had a large following, including Karl Pflock's father. It is certainly plausible that Barney Barnett was at least an occasional *True* reader and thus may well have seen Cahn's exposé.

The foregoing is just a sampling of the many appearances of crashed-saucer tales and stories about them in the popular media during the early 1950s, most of them drawing or reporting upon Scully's account. It should be noted that Karl Pflock conducted a careful search of the Socorro and Albuquerque newspapers—the latter because they had and still have statewide circulation—from the periods in which crashed-saucer reports and articles about them were rampant in the press nationwide. To our surprise, he located no such stories.

However, UFO-history researcher and Project 1947 director Jan Aldrich definitely recalls seeing articles about Scully's book and his claims in a number of New Mexico newspapers during his extensive survey of press archives in search of articles on UFO sightings and related matters. So it is safe to say there were also crashed-saucer articles in

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PROTO-UFOS

BY JEROME CLARK

Archival UFO research is a tedious business, requiring the searcher to wade through thousands of pages of dross for an ounce of gold. In the Internet age, though, things are easier, but it still takes patience. More and more, newspaper archives are being put on line, which means that you can conduct productive research without having to leave your home. Some of these services are free, and others demand a fee for access. In my experience, the latter are more extensive and more likely to yield a rich harvest.

This May, following advice by veteran UFO historian Barry Greenwood, I subscribed to a service—Ancestry.com—intended for those doing genealogical work. (The fee is $189 for one year.) Barry told me that since it included access to hundreds of American newspapers, it could be used as easily to dig up UFO and UFO-related materials, and of course he was right. As of this writing, in late July, I have spent two months working at this practically fulltime.

My interest is in pre-1947 aerial phenomena, unusual natural occurrences (ball lightning, bizarre meteorological effects), and Fortean anomalies (cryptozoological reports, falls from the sky, out-of-the-ordinary archaeological artifacts). My focus here, naturally, will be on the first. A word or two of explanation is in order before we go further.

Before 1947, as we all know, phrases such as "flying saucers" and "UFOs" did not exist. Therefore, one has to think of search words that are likely to produce hits which, at least on occasion, give one, at least approximately, what one is looking for. I spent a good part of nearly every day for six weeks plugging through close to 20,000 hits for the word "phenomenon." Currently, I am slogging my way through some 4,000 hits that respond to "Martian." Other key words I hope to pursue are "marvel," "curiosity," "sighting," "beings," and others that might be expected to appear in stories of this kind.

I should also add that an additional resource is a small but excellent e-list, Magonia Exchange, managed by Rod Brock (Bellingham, Washington) and Chris Aubeck (Madrid, Spain), whose membership is limited to those engaged in active pre-1947 UFO research. In what follows, a sampling of my preliminary finds, I draw mostly on my own discoveries but cite others' when they provide illumination or context.

Finally and importantly, the UFO phenomenon as we have come to conceive it since 1947 is not exactly nonexistent in the decades before then, but contemporary records of it are relatively scant. Accounts of aerial anomalies in 19th- and early 20th-century newspapers and periodicals tend to report sightings and occurrences of things that, at their weirdest, vary from medieval supernaturalism (armies in the clouds) to the incomprehensible (sky serpents). At their modest mundane, they are of recognizable astronomical, meteorological, and auroral phenomena. Before now, our idea of the pre-20th-century UFO phenomenon has been heavily influenced by the 1890s airship wave and also by post-1947 stories of people's remembered pre-1947 encounters with familiarly modern UFO types. So far, however, my current project has failed to uncover a single unambiguous UFO report in the post-Arnold sense. That doesn't mean that none are there; I have seen a few on Magonia Exchange and elsewhere. Still, I suspect that at some point, when we have accumulated more data than we have at the moment, a fresh look at early UFO history may be in order.

That said, what follows is a sampling of the more interesting proto-UFO sightings I have uncovered.

COLORED DISCS

An Associated Press dispatch—I found it in the Phoenix *Arizona Republic*, August 27, 1893—out of Cincinnati on August 26, 1893, recounted what it called a "solar phenomenon" allegedly experienced by persons living in and around Leslie, Kentucky, in Cumberland County. Half an hour after sunrise the previous day, residents noticed that the sun had a "very peculiar color."

The attention of several people was called to it, and while they were looking at it thousands of disks, seemingly about the size of a wagon wheel, were seen to fill the entire heavens, and all of them seemed to be in motion and to fill the heavens from the earth to the sun. The bodies were

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described as being round in shape until they approached the earth, when they would change to different shapes, some becoming triangular, some square, and others taking on various proportions and odd forms. The colors of the disks were also said to be of different shades—some bright red, some green, black, etc., but when they reached the earth all assumed a dense purple color. It appeared to those witnessing the phenomenon that the sun would swallow up some of the disks, and then again they would appear to sink into the solid ground and then disappear.

There was no noise except that made by the mountain folks, who, whenever a disk would come directly at them, would either run away at a great rate or fall on their knees and pray. The phenomenon lasted fully an hour, and when it was over the natives were pleased, for they were positive that judgment day had come, and they were not prepared therefor.

Chris Aubeck, whose knowledge of the proto-UFO phenomenon seems bottomless, has pointed to a curiously similar 1893 sighting, this one from the Mexico-United States border. Chris found it in an autobiographical work by José Vasconcelos, *Ulises Criollo: Vida del autor escrita por él mismo* (Mexico City: Ediciones Botas, 1935). The author, then 11 years old, was in the company of his mother and four sisters. As they crossed the international bridge at Piedras Negras around 11 a.m. on a hot, sunny day:

> Suddenly, from the smoky bosom of the atmosphere, a number of points of light began to shine which, advancing, expanding, became discs of a vivid red or gold color. . . .
>
> At first we thought they were patches of light produced by the dazzling sunlight. We rubbed our eyes, we asked each other what we thought they were, and we looked again. There was no doubt, the discs rotated, they became spheres of light; they rose from the plain and went up, they came close to the railing we were leaning on. Like a spinning top buzzing through the tenuous steamy atmosphere. We attended the birth of beings of light. Excited, we talked about it, we let out cries of amazement; we felt as elated as one who attends a revelation.

Anomaly compiler William R. Corliss cites a generally comparable sighting in *Remarkable Luminous Phenomena in Nature* (Sourcebook Project, 2001), said to have occurred in Chatham, England, on November 4, 1867. He cites as a source James E. Beveridge, "An Extraordinary Phenomenon," *Symons's Monthly Meteorological Magazine* 2 (1867): 130:

> On the afternoon . . . between the hours of three and four, I witnessed a very extraordinary sight in the heavens. I have not heard of any one hereabout having seen it. The facts are as follow[s]: . . . I was passing by the Mill by the Waterworks Reservoir. On the gallery I noticed the miller uttering exclamations of surprise, and looking earnestly towards the west. On inquiring what took his attention so much, he said, "Look, sir, I never saw such a sight in my life!" On turning in the direction towards which he was looking, the west, I also was astounded—numberless black discs in groups and scattered were passing rapidly through the air. He said his attention was directed to them by his little girl, who called to him in the Mill, saying, "Look, father, here are a lot of balloons coming!" They continued for more than twenty minutes, the time I stayed. In passing in front of the sun they appeared like large cannon shot. Several groups passed over my head, disappearing suddenly, and leaving puffs of grayish brown vapor very much like smoke.

Mountain Light

A correspondent of the *New York Sun* filed this story in April 1885 (reprinted in the *Atchison (Kans.) Globe*, April 15, 1885):

> A curious phenomenon was witnessed by residents of Mongaup [New York], Sullivan County, a small village in the Delaware Valley, five miles west of Port Jervis, on the night of the recent great snow storm. On the Pennsylvania side of the river the Pike County hills rise steep and rocky to several hundred feet high. While the storm was at its height a bright light suddenly flashed among the high rocks opposite Mongaup, near the summit of the range. There was no blaze, but the snow-covered rock glowed like red-hot iron for a distance of several feet around. The light resembled a huge bed of live coals, and cast a weird reflection on the snow, throwing the trunks and lower branches of the bare trees into strong relief. The light gleamed through the storm for several minutes, and then gradually grew dim and disappeared.
>
> As it would be difficult and hazardous for any person to reach the spot where the light was seen, even in the daytime and in summer, it is not thought that any one could have possibly clambered to the spot at night, up the steep ledge, covered two feet deep with frozen snow, and through a blinding snow-storm. The mysterious light is, therefore, not charged to any human agency, and the superstitious look upon its strange appearance as some kind of an omen. An old inhabitant says that in 1830, when cholera raged through this county, similar lights appeared on the mountains in the winter and spring. He says it is another warning that cholera is on its way.

Creek Lights

From the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, July 17, 1878:

> A gentleman[,] passing along the Fountain late night before last a short distance above the Half-way house, witnessed a very remarkable phenomenon just across

the bridge on the Garden of the Gods road. What seemed to be a very brilliant meteoritic rain or shower of falling stars suddenly appeared but a few feet above the surface of the creek, dropping into it with a loud splash, and a singular continuous sound, resembling the breaking of glass bottles mingled with human cries and "swear words." The display was of short duration, lasting only a few seconds, but our informant states that it was a most beautiful sight while it lasted. The different colors which appeared were very bright and vivid—the parabolic curve made by reason of its bright stripes, presenting much the appearance of a rainbow.

Light and balls of fire

Atlanta Constitution, June 21, 1892:

> Conyers, Ga., June 20.—(Special.)—Mr. J. L. Shaw, a very well known young man in our community, was out at a late-hour last Sunday night [June 12 or 19, depending on what is meant by "last"]. He said there was a mysterious light visible in the heavens, and balls of fire fell around him. He was at a loss to account for the phenomenon and made tracks for home.

This account, like the one before it, is typical of many which suffer from a frustrating lack of detail. In the Colorado story, for one problem, the reader struggles to comprehend the link, if any, between an anomalous light phenomenon and the sounds of breaking bottles and cursing. The Georgia tale suggests something like a modern UFO encounter but does little more, sadly, than suggest as much. We would like to know, obviously, what that "mysterious light" looked like and how the "balls of fire" related to it. Sadly, it is most unlikely we will ever know.

Ocean lights

From the *Lowell (Mass.) Daily Sun*, February 8, 1894:

> NEW YORK, Feb. 8.—Captain Corning of the British schooner W. and H. Witherspoon, from Porto Cabello [Venezuela], reports a peculiar phenomenon while his vessel was in the Gulf stream, on the west coast of Florida. The captain says he saw strange lights which apparently would rise from the water and ascend to a height of about 25 feet and then, after a report similar to an explosion, would go out. Captain Corning has no explanation to make of this strange phenomenon, but is positive that he did see the lights.

"A perfect puzzle"

On January 11, 1892, the U.S. steamship *Thetis* sailed from San Diego for the west coast of Baja California, on Mexico's west coast. On April 10 the *Atlanta Constitution* printed a long account, written for it by expedition member George W. Crusselle. The following is an excerpt:

> There was an incident that has been a perfect puzzle to every one that has heard of it. Perhaps some one is able to elucidate the phenomenon satisfactorily.
>
> There are several salt water lagoons running in from the beach which swarm with the finest kinds of birds. One day Mr. S. L. Cutbereil and myself went over into the largest lagoon hunting and had tramped around quite a long time getting only single shots, but keeping a lookout for a larger flock to shoot into. Suddenly we saw what we took at first to be a large body of birds, but almost as quickly as we saw it it had changed its appearance from a dark to a brilliant color about the same dazzling appearance that reflected sunlight from a mirror or polished surface has. It was approaching us from the sea and traveling inland. At first it was in the shape of a balloon and about fifty feet high by thirty broad and traveled very rapidly. Again it changed its form into the shape of an hour glass and made a most terrific swoop down on to the surface of the water in the lagoon and spread out all over the surface, covering it with a most brilliant halo of light. It only remained there a moment, when it rose again and formed itself in several fantastic shapes in quick succession, and traveling with the rapidity of lightning almost, first in one direction and then another, changing its course by abrupt angles. These peculiar antics kept up for fifteen minutes at least, and it finally disappeared away inland.
>
> It struck me as being a sack of phosphorescent gas, for it never showed a ragged edge, but smooth edges, just as a rubber sack full of air would be mashed in different shapes. We thought it was sunlight reflected from some clouds, but on looking, there was not a piece of cloud visible as large as a handkerchief, nor was there a helostadt [sic, heliostat] within a thousand miles of us, most probably, which could throw such a powerful reflection and that size, too. After we lost sight of it we were almost blinded and not able to discern objects clearly for a half hour afterwards. If some one can explain it I would be very glad to hear from them.

Luminous cylinder

From the *Hagerstown (Md.) Herald and Torch Light*, February 21, 1889:

> An unusual meteorological phenomenon was witnessed at Oella [now part of Catonsville] last Thursday night [February 14]. A brilliant luminous cylindrical body passed over the heavens, seemingly not more than several hundred feet above the earth, and forming a curve, appeared to descend to the ground, not more than a mile from the village. Its course was with the Patapsco river, in a northwesterly direction, and during the time it was visible, which was several seconds, the vicinity was lighted as brilliantly as if by an arc electric lamp. Just at the time of its appearance a number of villagers

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A CLOSE ENCOUNTER BEFORE FLYING SAUCERS

BY FRANK JOHN REID

No matter how honest an account appears, human suspiciousness can always conjure a pebble-in-the-shoe's worth of doubt about a close-encounter UFO report *remembered* from before the Kenneth Arnold case of June 24, 1947, which saddled UFOs with both popular recognition and the inane name "flying saucers." Are the witnesses fibbing their way onto our bandwagon? It is thus quite interesting to find a CE1 account *published* before Arnold's, though the account was amplified shortly afterward. Our record is in the form of a news story copied by the indefatigable Ted Bloecher as he was conducting the research for his classic *Report on the UFO Wave of 1947* (The author, 1967).

The story appeared in the *Waterloo (Iowa) Daily Courier*, on Monday, July 7, 1947, on page 2. It is a bit confusing because it reprints an earlier incident prior to a contemporary interview with the witness.

WE SAW IT FIRST

(An enterprising *Courier* staffer recalled the following incident and dug it out of the *Courier* of Aug. 18, 1946.)

> Perhaps the Swedes aren't the only ones bothered by flying missiles, believed bombs, at least if reports by several Waterloo residents are reliable. Thursday night an object was seen buzzing around the trees in an east side neighborhood, gradually ascending all the while, giving off, or surrounded by, a cloud of white, radiant vapor and eventually disappearing high in the sky.
>
> One person termed the object a great white bird, another a bomb.
>
> Mrs. Russell Lampman, 317 West 14th Street, Monday recalled it was her husband who first spotted the Thing, "which gave you a kind of funny feeling, like something was going to happen." She said it made no sound.
>
> It was about six feet three inches tall, like a large man, and rather rectangular in shape. The object hovered over an alley near her home, Mrs. Lampman said.
>
> "If I'd been a religious woman, I'd have thought it was a vision," she recalled.
>
> The object came from the northwest and settled 20 or 25 feet above the ground, Mrs. Lampman said.
>
> [Mr.] Lampman, employee of the John Deere Tractor Company, saw it first and called his wife and neighbors. "We watched it for about an hour," Mr. Lampman said. "But you know when you're standing that way, looking at something, you're not sure exactly how long a time it is.
>
> "It glowed with a kind of yellowish light. It wasn't dazzling, but it was bright, like something supernatural. It seemed to be a sign.
>
> "Later, it started upward, not directly, but diagonally, and going toward the east.
>
> "It bobbed back and forth and up and down, like a switchman with a lantern. We watched it until it went out of sight."

This needs a modicum of disentangling. The sighting itself occurred on the night of Thursday, August 15, 1946. The Lampmans were interviewed for the July 7 story by a *Courier* writer early on Monday, July 7, 1947. It's just possible that Mrs. Lampman was the *Courier* employee remembering and retrieving the 1946 news item.

In 1946, the *Courier* put the event into the context of Scandinavia's ghost rockets. The Lampmans interpreted this persistent, luminous thing as a supernatural "sign"—a portent of some coming (probably disastrous) event. The "funny feeling" was not a physiological effect of the UFO.

It's worth noting that this "rather rectangular" thing was being reclassified as a "flying saucer" in 1947, contrary to the myth that the slang term put a disc-shaped imprint upon the American imagination and perception.

August 18, 1946, the date of the original story, was a Sunday. Obviously, the Lampmans couldn't have been interviewed on the 19th about an event on Thursday the 15th. But if they had been interviewed on Monday, August 12, the event would have taken place on the 8th. Even a weekly newspaper of 50 years ago would have explained that it was Thursday the 8th, not Thursday the 15th. Therefore, the Monday of the Lampmans' recollection was the day of 1947 publication.

So there we have it, a close encounter before the era of UFOs, let alone close encounters. ✦

Frank John Reid is a historical consultant for the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.

ASTRONOMERS GET SERIOUS ABOUT ETI (IF NOT UFOS)

BY MARK RODEGHIER

The last years of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st have witnessed an explosion of astronomical knowledge about every aspect of our universe. Astronomers have detected planets around other stars, they have measured the lumpiness in the microwave background radiation from the Big Bang, and they have learned much about how galaxies were formed (as little ones gathered together under gravitational interaction to make big ones). These advances have allowed cosmology—the study of the large-scale structure and evolution of the universe—to become an observational science. Thus, astronomers now believe they know the age of the universe (about 13.7 billion years), and that there is lots of dark matter around—stuff that can't be easily detected but affects the distribution of regular matter through gravity. And there is also dark energy, which is another story entirely.

Astronomers and physicists have a well-known propensity to conduct thought experiments and speculate freely based on just a few facts (which are hopefully reasonably well determined). And scientists are just as interested in the possible existence of extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) as the rest of us, although not UFOs, at least publicly.

Since we know much more about our Galaxy and the universe, scientists currently have enough facts in hand to get dangerous, much like someone who has learned a little bit about construction and decides that he is ready not only to build that porch, but to tackle a whole home addition by himself. To be fair, not all the speculation is that far-fetched; some of it is quite sophisticated and has led to interesting results relevant to ufology, which is what I write about here.

HOW OLD IS ET?

These are the questions about ETI that we would all like to have answered:

1) Are there intelligent beings in the Galaxy?
2) If so, how common is intelligent life?
3) Where is intelligent life likely to exist? Will it be near our solar system?

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For some of us, the UFO phenomenon provides strong evidence that the answer to the first question is yes. For those scientists speculating about these matters in print, the UFO phenomenon is ignored as a source of evidence, and any possible answer is left to the SETI folks. In fact, because the UFO phenomenon is disregarded, various convoluted reasons have to be advanced to explain the nonappearance of ETI on Earth (the famous Fermi paradox, named after physicist Enrico Fermi).

However, there is plenty of discussion in the scientific literature about the rarity of ETI, and the type of environments in which it is likely to flourish in our Galaxy. The popular book *Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe,* by Peter D. Ward and Donald Brownlee (Copernicus, 2000), argues that ETI is not very common, for example, and explains why Earth is such a good spot for the development of intelligent life.

The astronomer Charles Lineweaver has recently devoted several papers to the question of life in the universe and the existence of earth-like planets. It is now possible to scientifically consider these topics because we know that planets like Earth need elements heavier than helium to form, and we understand the star formation history of the universe fairly well. Since star formation and evolution lead to the creation of these so-called "heavy elements," Lineweaver can estimate with some precision the formation rate of earth-like planets. Also, discoveries of extrasolar planets have shown a link between the heavy-element content of stars and the positions of giant planets around them.

Lineweaver's analysis shows that the formation of earth-like planets peaked in the universe about five billion years after the universe began. (The Earth formed 4.5 billion years ago, or about 9 billion years after the Big Bang.) As a consequence, about three-fourths of the existing earth-like planets are older than the Earth, and, on average, they are 1.8 ±0.9 billion years older.

As Lineweaver states, "If life forms readily on earth-like planets—as suggested by the rapid appearance of life on Earth—this analysis gives us an age distribution for life on such planets and a rare clue about how we compare to other life forms which may inhabit the universe." Plainly put, it implies that there might be some ET who are much, much older than we are. And this makes the non-appearance of aliens on Earth even more problematic, if we, again, ignore

UFO sightings. Lineweaver hasn't yet discussed this implication of his research, and I suspect that he wishes to remain on fairly solid ground. (For those who want to read his work, many current physics and astronomy papers are available at the physics preprint server at xxx.lanl.gov/abs/astro-ph/; Lineweaver's paper is 0012399. Or you can search for others at the main page, xxx.lanl.gov.)

Another cautious yet bold astronomer is Mario Livio, at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, which manages the Hubble Space Telescope. Livio has written a popular book on cosmology, *The Accelerating Universe* (Wiley, 2000), and a paper entitled "How Rare Are Extraterrestrial Civilizations and When Did They Emerge?" (astro-ph/9808237), which was actually published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, the flagship publication in astronomy. He concludes that ETI is not necessarily rare (he was refuting the arguments of another astronomer), but he also calculates, based on the cosmic history of carbon production, that the most likely time for ETI to first emerge was about 3 billion years ago. In other words, due to constraints on the production of elements necessary for life, intelligent life was unlikely to evolve until some appreciable fraction of the age of the universe.

For our purposes, though, the key point is that there are good scientific reasons to conclude that, *if ETI exists*, some civilizations might be well over 1 billion years more advanced than us. This statement is based on the critical assumption that alien civilizations don't have limited lifetimes because of self-induced catastrophes or such astronomical hazards as gamma-ray bursts or nearby supernova (an important consideration that deserves a separate article).

To take this one step further, astronomer Milan M. Cirkovic of the Astronomical Observatory of Belgrade has stated, based on these results, that "it is reasonable to assume that there will be, somewhere in the Galaxy, an inhabited planet (say) 3 Gyr [billion years] older than Earth. Since the set of intelligent societies is likely to be dominated by the small number of oldest and most advanced members, . . . we are likely to encounter a civilization actually more ancient than 1.8 Gyr (and probably significantly more)." (See his article at astro-ph/0306186.)

Those of us who contemplate the UFO evidence would not be surprised by this conclusion. UFOs reports, if caused by alien technology, provide ample evidence that the intelligence behind the curtain is very, very advanced. These astronomical conclusions about earth-like planets and the age of alien civilizations make the UFO-ETI link more plausible, whether or not astronomers see it as so.

ET IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Our Galaxy contains about 100 billion stars, and many of them are similar to the Sun. Of more immediate import, especially to the SETI folks and ufologists, is how many stars might have habitable planets in the near vicinity of the Sun. Recently, Margaret Turnbull and Jill Tarter have produced a catalog of nearby habitable stellar systems (astro-ph/0210675). Their work is founded on the recent advances in knowledge of stellar systems, including more precise positional information from the Hipparcos satellite, and theoretical studies on habitable zones and stellar evolution. Very simply put, the stars in the catalog must be 3 billion years old, stable, and support liquid water on the surface of whatever planets are properly distanced. The authors produced a catalog for upcoming SETI searches that will use radio telescopes soon to come online.

Based on their assumptions of what stars would make suitable candidates for life to evolve, they found more than 17,000 such systems within about 850 light years, 75% of which are within about 450 light years. Those numbers provide lots of potential places for extraterrestrials to exist within what is really our local neighborhood in the Galaxy. The vast majority of these systems have not been studied at length, or at all, by past SETI efforts.

So while the catalog doesn't tell us about ETs directly, the results are, once more, compatible with the UFO evidence. Earth isn't in an isolated portion of the Galaxy, with only a few solar-type stars nearby. Instead, we are literally surrounded with stars that may well harbor similar planetary systems.

In future articles, I expect to report on additional astronomical results that pertain to ufology, including some of that wild speculation I mentioned beforehand. ✦

BARNETT—*continued from page 18*

newspapers that Barnett could well have read during his business travels or even at home.

A PIECE OF THE WRONG PUZZLE

What all of this tells us is that Barnett, contrary to what has been argued in the past, could easily have heard and read tales of a crashed flying saucer and the bodies of its flight crew. As early as 1949, these stories were circulating and had placed, at the very least, one of the crashes in New Mexico. Can we reasonably say Barnett never heard or read any of these? Can we reasonably say Barnett wasn't influenced by them?

There is no reason to link the Barnett tale with the Roswell crash. There is *no* evidence to establish such a link. The testimony of those who heard the story from Barnett suggests only that he began telling it in the 1950s or perhaps late 1940s, and we already have shown that such accounts were then circulating widely in all manner of popular publications and a bestselling book. Although Stanton Friedman says Barnett couldn't have heard about the Roswell crash, this is irrelevant. He certainly could have heard and probably did hear of the alleged Aztec crash and other similar tales that were the subjects of much press attention and speculation in those years.

Although Barnett's story was once a mainstay of the Roswell case, it now has lost its punch. We have no way of establishing what Barnett saw, what he knew, or even if he was involved as he reportedly claimed. The most devastating evidence is the diary kept by his wife Ruth. There is absolutely no hint that anything strange happened those first 10–12 days in July, in fact, quite the opposite. All the entries are mundane, and they tend to establish Barney's travels and whereabouts during that critical period. There simply is nothing to indicate that he saw or could have seen anything associated with the Roswell case or, for that matter, something extraordinary that was altogether independent of it.

Like so much of the Roswell case and matters that have been associated with it, this is another puzzle piece that has found its way into the wrong box and must be thrown out. It not only doesn't help establish the truth, it makes it more difficult to do so, muddying the waters and diverting resources from more useful inquiries. With the Barnett story eliminated from the Roswell picture, we can move on to other aspects of the case that might bear fruit. The evidence as it stands today and what we know of the early-1950s saucers-are-from-space and crashed-saucer "buzz" tell us that Barney Barnett and whatever he may or may not have encountered had nothing to do with what happened between Roswell and Corona in the summer of 1947.

It is time to move on.

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Roswell Daily Record

GRAND

Claims Army Is Stacking Courts Martial

RAAF Captures Flying Saucer On Ranch in Roswell Region

House Passes Tax Slash by Large Margin

No Details of Flying Disk Are Revealed

Levelland—*continued from page 6*

said that Sheriff Clem was genuinely rattled by the events of November 1957. "You could see fear in his eyes when he spoke of it," she said, and one gathers that this fear, in a man not generally afraid of *people*, was not due so much to the threats given him by government or military officials, but to the UFO event itself.

Numerous older people in Levelland remember Sheriff Clem's UFO experience, and without exception the witnesses to whom we spoke described him as a trustworthy and truthful man not in the least inclined to invent or embellish stories. A real estate agent named Sam Langford, for example, recalled the sheriff's chasing a mysterious object "up and down the road a bit," though the sheriff's car died when he got close. (Several older witnesses corroborated this.) Langford added that "Weir was a good, solid man" for whom he had always had great respect.

Clearly Weir Clem comes across as a reliable source, and the fact that he has given us, through his daughter, an account of a burn ring, corroborated by another witness and connected in all likelihood to the UFO case of 1957 in Levelland, makes it a matter of little wonder that, as I originally suspected, the official anxiety level reached the proportions it did. It's one thing to dismiss witness accounts of an oval object landing on the roadways and stalling everyone's car engines, but it's another thing to have to conceal the memory of such physical landing-trace evidence as a burn ring, especially a burn ring associated with dead cattle.

Mollie and I were rather surprised, though perhaps we shouldn't have been, to find that although a lot of older folks in town remembered the events of November 1957, younger people virtually without exception did not; many with whom we spoke, even when they were interested in UFOs in general, were completely unaware that anything was ever supposed to have happened in Levelland. The official dismissal of the problem as "ball lightning" seems to have made a fairly tight and memory-eroding cover story over the years. But the Levelland case is open once more, and I dare say it will never again really be closed. ✦

PROTO-UFOS—*continued from page 21*

were returning from work, and the uncommon sight created considerable alarm among them.

"A COLUMN OF BURNISHED SILVER"

From the *Reading (Pa.) Daily Eagle*, August 14, 1869:

> A most singular phenomenon occurred at midday on Saturday last [August 7], near the village of Adamstown, Lancaster County. About 200 yards north of the village is an open lot and at 12 o'clock, while the villagers were taking dinner, a luminous body was seen to settle near the center of the lot. It is represented by 4 or 5 different parties, who witnessed it from several points, to have assumed a square shape and shooting up into a column about 3 or 4 feet in height and about 2 feet in thickness.
>
> The sun was shining brightly at the time and under its rays, the object glittered like a column of burnished silver. The presence, after reaching its full effulgence, gradually faded away and in 10 minutes time, it had entirely disappeared. Those who saw it were unable to tell what it was. It seemed to inspire terror rather than admiration. After it had disappeared a number of persons visited the spot but not a trace of anything unusual could be found. Similar objects had been seen in the neighborhood on several occasions during the nighttime but none before in the daytime or so bright as this. The land in the immediate vicinity is dry, there being no swamp about, otherwise the phenomenon might be accounted for. We do no know whether the jack-o'-lantern assumes such large proportions or whether it appears in midday under a bright sun. Perhaps some of our friends versed in the sciences, can solve the mystery.

BIZARRE "CLOUD"

From the *Ogden (Utah) Standard*, July 26, 1894:

> Last Friday evening [July 20], Bernard Parry and wife are reported having seen a most unusual phenomenon. As they were nearing their home in Marriotts settlement, about sundown, they observed a small black cloud in the direction of North Ogden, coming swiftly toward them. The cloud seemed to enlarge, then collapse again, all the while rapidly moving toward the southwest. When it approached within 150 yards of the road it seemed to stop and remain motionless in the air. The sides appeared to be folded toward the center and pinned—something like the uniform hat of the old Continentals, and resembled the meshes of a net. In the center appeared to be many small birds part black and part white. All at once the cloud wheeled toward Ogden and in a moment was lost to sight.
>
> Other parties living north of Marriotts claim to have seen the same startling phenomenon.

SKY SERPENTS

One especially weird feature of the proto-UFO phenomenon is the sky serpent, reported from time to time in press accounts in the 19th and early 20th century. Few ufologists have paid any attention to them or even seem aware of such reports, though Frank John Reid, now CUFOS archivist, published a survey of known sightings (if that is the word) in the September/October 1956 issue of *Saucer News*. My *UFO Encyclopedia* has a two-page entry on the subject. In the course of my current project, I have so far uncovered three previously unknown reports. I report them in ascending order of strangeness.

The first is from a North Carolina newspaper, the *Statesville Landmark*, for December 3, 1880:

> A meteor of surpassing brightness was seen about midnight of the 1st instant [December 1] almost 8 miles east of Statesville. It made everything very light about the premises of the observer. It had the shape of a huge spotted serpent, 75 yards long, as large as a pine tree, with eyes very distinct and mouth open toward the north pole. About ten feet back from the head it seemed to rest on the sky and the head part to be elevated; then a little further back it was raised in a kind of loop, and the tail reached down toward the tops of the trees. It was seen by the man and his family about a half hour, and then it gradually passed away. The observer thought that it portended some terrible calamity, and was very much frightened.

Though the reporting is less than clear, one infers that the "serpent" was a meteor train (though it is hard to believe it would have survived half an hour longer than the meteor that gave it life) or an auroral effect. The next story, from early April 1890, apparently is something else, though its meaning, if any, is buried under a dollop of ridicule disguised as humor. It was found in the Albert Lea, Minnesota, *Freeborn County Standard*, April 17, 1890, and evidently reprinted from an uncredited Missouri newspaper:

> Jefferson Rawbone, a well-to-do farmer living near St. Louis, drove into that town with a load of turnips last week, sold his produce, drank thirteen milk punches and started for home. Mr. Rawbone witnessed a remarkable phenomenon. The country seemed to be alive with small white snakes with pink eyes and yellow wings. This is Mr. Rawbone's second attack. He thinks it is a warning of some sort.

One gets the impression that Jefferson Rawbone—a wonderful name, by the way—did make some kind of serious claim about a fantastic experience, only to find himself the butt of public derision. Worse, his story was judged unworthy of even being reported in any meaningful

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fashion. Perhaps Rawbone was trying to report something like this, again from the *Statesville Landmark*, September 20, 1904:

> Mrs. John B. Lippard and children report a strange sight. They say that while over on their farm near here [Troutman, North Carolina] last Friday afternoon [September 16] they saw 30 or more large snakes sailing through the air. They say the snakes seemed to have fins and would average five feet long and four or five inches wide. They watched the snakes sail around and alight in a piece of thickety pine woods. . . . Most assuredly these people saw something. Was it the mirage of the plains or was it perchance . . . pterodactyls who have been Van Winkling since the pliocene period?

In my *UFO Encyclopedia* entry on sky serpents, I cite a May 30, 1888, *New York Times* story alleging a similar encounter in Darlington County, South Carolina, three days earlier. It is claimed that three sisters, walking through a wooded area, spotted a 15-foot, hissing serpent passing overhead. The article asserts that earlier in the day other witnesses in the county had seen the same unlikely sight.

I have a certain fondness for these sorts of extreme experiential claims—what anomalist Mark Chorvinsky calls, not so euphemistically, "hopeless cases." At this stage of my life I feel no particular compulsion to rush to explain such things, except when a persuasive explanation is handy or at least potentially attainable. Otherwise, they serve to underscore how marvelous or inexplicable or absurd—but undeniably wonderful—can be the experiences, or perceived experiences, of our fellow human beings.

One can say all one wants about these relics of the dragon tradition without ever quite coming to grips with the question of why some people, even in relatively recent times, believe they have experienced them personally. If one wanted to be sufficiently irritating, one could also think of those CE3s and abduction cases in which claimants report seeing flying-serpent logos on alien uniforms. One need not believe in literal dragons, or for that matter in literal aliens, to wonder how or why such things persist in some persons' experience of the world. Experience, it is surely true, is a deeper well than we are supposed to know.

This is the first of several articles on pre-1947 aerial phenomena. ✦

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ABSTRACTS

New Analysis of Soil Samples from the Delphos UFO Case, by *Phyllis A. Budinger.* Many analyses have been performed on soil exposed to a purported UFO release in Delphos, Kansas, which occurred in late 1971. Beginning in 1999, a new set of data from numerous analytical tests was generated using state-of-the-art equipment. The goal of this analysis was to determine the molecular composition of the material released by the UFO. Solid and conclusive data presented in this paper accomplished this identification to the extent that the chemical composition of the release is at minimum 95% characterized.

Analysis of Photograph of a High-Speed Ball of Light, by *Richard F. Haines.* This pilot sighting report and color photograph of an unidentified aerial phenomenon (UAP) called for a number of different forensic methods including photoanalysis, aircraft-window study, camera-lens-film analyses, and evaluation of reporter credibility. The single-frame, Kodak color, copy negative was submitted for examination by one of the several eyewitnesses. This paper describes the results of these analyses, from which several conclusions can be made. Whatever the UAP was, it was probably in subsonic flight. No evidence of a hoax or double exposure was found, nor were any bolides, meteorites, or other unidentified aerial phenomena reported for that time and place.

The Implant Motif in UFO Abduction Literature, by *Keith Basterfield.* The recurring theme of implants in UFO abduction lore is examined. A comprehensive survey of English-language UFO literature uncovered 84 such accounts. This article reviews the views and comments on this topic by UFO researchers, and undertakes an analysis of the limited data available. Suggestions for future research are provided.

False Memories and UFO Abductions, by *Thomas E. Bullard.* Most psychological research identifies abduction experiencers as mentally normal people, yet mainstream psychologists typically dismiss abduction accounts as false memories of impossible events. This conclusion grows out of a heated 20-year controversy over recovered memories of child sexual abuse and satanic ritual abuse, where proponents argue that the mind represses memories of events too terrible to recall, while opponents see fantasies created by the suggestions of therapists. A review of the recovered memory debate and research findings about the malleable, reconstructive nature of memory enable the ufologist to understand that abductions—and investigative methods used to recover them—really are similar in many respects to memories of abuse and their recovery. Yet the apparent close parallels between memories of abduction and recovered memories of abuse diverge when alleged abuse survivors manifest psychological abnormalities that abduction experiencers do not share. Elaborate accounts of satanic rituals also fail to exhibit the consistency of unexpected content and sequence that characterizes abduction reports. Although there is no denying the human capacity to create false memories of abduction, differences suggest that recovered memories of abuse originate in the false memory process while abduction memories remain independent of it.

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